Local Geography

Essays on Multicultural Hawai'i

Dennis Kawaharada

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Front Cover Photo: Dad's first boat, He'eia Kea Pier, c. 1957.

Back Cover Photo: Old car and mango tree in front of the neighbor's house, Kea'ahala Road, c. 1957.

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There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

—Walt Whitman, “There Was a Child Went Forth”

Note: For meanings of Hawaiian words not defined in the text, see the online *Hawaiian Dictionary* at http://wehewehe.org/cgi-bin/hdict?l=e.

Mango Trees on Kea'ahala Road

… it hard to love de fruit
If I never did climb de tree.

—Everton Sylvester, "dilly dally"

Four large mango trees grew around our small two-bedroom house, one tree for each house lot along a graveled lane off Kea'ahala Road. Originally from South Asia, brought to Hawai'i during the nineteenth century, the mango flourished and became so popular it seemed everyone's house had a tree. Varieties came from Mexico, the Philippines, Jamaica, and India.

I doubt if our landlord counted the trees as amenities of his property, but for the neighborhood kids, they were the main attraction. After school, on weekends, during summer, we climbed the trees and sat in the branches, enjoying the cool breezes, talking story, gazing out over the rooftops and fields, to see what was beyond.

We knew each tree intimately – where to place hands and feet on the trunks and branches as we climbed into the sun-lit domes of leaves. My favorite tree was the one growing above the corrugated iron roof of the outdoor laundry room, where sleek gray lizards laid small pearl-sized eggs, and black and yellow garden spiders hung webs in the rafters. (We tossed grasshoppers into the webs to watch the spiders rush to bite our offerings, wrapping them into gauzy bundles for later consumption.)

The branches of this tree were the best for climbing and sitting. We built a tree house out of scrap lumber – a fort for our war games, a private space away from home. My older brother, who later became a structural engineer, was the designer and construction chief.

The mango trees changed with the seasons. As the rainy months faded into memory and the days turned brighter, the sky bluer, reddish young leaves and sprays of small flowers sprouted from the weathered, age-cracked bark, and bees buzzed through the green space. As summer progressed, small bulbs at the end of long stems swelled into heavy fruit.

Our parents let us climb the trees without supervision, trusting we wouldn't fall and injure ourselves. And we never did. Climbing trees seemed as natural as walking. We balanced as we moved out on branches to pick fruits that dangled like prizes at our fingertips. Summer was a time of feasting. We ate this most delicious of tropical fruits half-ripe, the flesh crisp and tart, with only a hint of the softer, sweeter, juicier ripeness to come. We peeled them with

our teeth, dipped them into a sauce of shōyu and sugar, with a dash of salt and pepper, and devoured them down to their hairy seeds.

We foraged for other wild fruits. We ate the guava, from tropical America, brought to Hawai‘i in 1791. The seedy fruits were tasty, but eating too many could give you stuck-shit.

We ate the small blue-black Java plums, from Southeast Asia, which we made into a mash seasoned with salt in a mayonnaise jar.

We ate the wī (Tahitian apple or ambarella), originally from Melanesia and Western Polynesia. Two gray-barked trees grew in our front yard. The fruit had a spiky seed that reminded me of an underwater mine used to blow up ships and submarines in World War II.

We ate the yellow-green starfruit (carambola) that we discovered in a ravine in a cow pasture toward Ha‘ikū Road. Indigenous to South and Southeast Asia and Indonesia, the starfruit came to Hawai‘i in the nineteenth century. It produces fruit twice a year, in May-June and October-December. (The fruit was also introduced to the West Indies, along with the breadfruit tree, to feed slaves.)

We ate the small red-yellow strawberry guavas, called “waiwī.” The slender tree, introduced from Brazil, has spread wildly up the mountains to 4,000 feet, crowding out native vegetation. The trees were so thick on a hillside we could descend from tree to tree rather than walk on the ground. As we climbed up a slender branch, it would bend down toward the next tree. We climbed onto the lower tree and let go of the first branch, which sprang back up behind us.

Of the native fruits, we ate the pōpolo, a tiny black relative of the tomato, which we found on bushes during our rambles through the fields. Some forms of this nightshade are poisonous, but in Hawai‘i the plant is medicinal. Much later I learned the pōpolo plant is a body of Kāne, the Hawaiian god of life, and is considered the foundation of Hawaiian pharmacology. The raw juice from its leaves and berries is used alone or in compounds for respiratory disorders and skin problems, as well as a healing agent for cuts. A tea made from the tender young leaves at the tips of branches is a tonic for the digestive tract.

We ate the coconut, that intrepid oceanic traveler from tropical Asia. This tree is a body of the god Kū. Upright, with no branches to hold onto, it was hard to climb. We nailed hand and foot grips on a twelve-foot-tall tree to get to the green nuts, which we preferred when the meat inside was still soft, forming in the milk. To get at the meat, we pounded the stem-end on the asphalt pavement to fray the thick husk, then pulled off the husk in sections. After poking a hole in one of the eyes with a file or an ice pick, we drank the milk, then cracked the nut open with a hammer to scoop out the gelatinous meat. (Years later I learned from a Tongan friend how to husk and crack a coconut in the traditional Polynesian way, using a sharpened hardwood stick and a stone.)

Our favorite native fruit was the ‘ōhi‘a ‘ai, or mountain apple, another plant in the pharmacopoeia of old Hawai‘i. The juice from its bark and leaves

is used in remedies for sore throat, bronchitis, and consumption. Endemic to Indo-Malaysia, ʻōhiʻa ʻai was carried as a seed east across the Pacific on voyaging canoes. Its lustrous red skin gives it the appearance of the Western apple, but its flesh is soft and spongy, full of sweet juice. We didn't have a tree near our house, so it was a treat when a family that had one gave us a bagful during the mid- to late-summer season.

One day the Hamocons, who lived across Keaʻahala Road, took me with them up the Windward Coast to Kaliuwaʻa, home of the pig-god Kamapuaʻa, to pick mountain apples on the way up for a swim at the pool below the waterfall. We used a picker to get the fruit because the branches are weak, making the tall trees dangerous to climb.

On weekend mornings I woke up excited by the prospects of climbing trees or playing with the neighborhood gang, whose members were of Japanese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Chinese, Portuguese, and other European ancestries, pure-blooded and mixed. We played together by the seasons of sports and games – baseball, football, basketball; tops, yo-yos, kites, and eggets (as we called marbles). We played war or roamed the fields, pastures, and hills, foraging for fruits and finding secret places; we explored Keaʻahala Stream, used red scoop nets to catch rainbow guppies and swordtails for our mayonnaise jar aquariums, and floated boats made from scrap wood down the quick current.

Play was sometimes delayed on Sunday when my mother decided that my brother, sister, and I should go to the Methodist Church in Kailua as punishment for fighting with each other or disobeying rules. In Sunday School we were supposed to learn how to get along with others and how to obey our parents. We sat on folding iron chairs in hollow-tile classrooms and read Bible stories about Creation, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Satan's deception and the couple's disobedience – eating the forbidden apple. God's punishment seemed overly severe: banishment from Paradise, doomed progeny, a fallen world of tormented sinners and wicked infidels.

The concept of Original Sin was strange. How could we inherit the sin of Adam and Eve, who weren't even related to us? From pictures of them, I could see that they were haole, not of the ancestors of us Jepanis (locals of Japanese ancestry, from the Hawaiian word "Kepanī"). How could we be guilty of a sin committed by a couple unrelated to us at the beginning of time? And why was the apple forbidden? My mother often brought home apples for us to eat from Dote's Market on the corner of Keaʻahala Road and Kamehameha Highway. And what was wrong with picking and eating fruit, which we also did regularly?

Christianity offered redemption through Christ. My understanding of redemption came from my mother's cutting off the box tops of Rinso Blue

laundry detergent and taking them to a Redemption Center to trade for bath towels. So redemption meant turning something worthless into something of value. But unsullied by Original Sin, I didn't feel a need to be washed.

God seemed to be a possibility, so I tried praying at night before falling asleep. I never got a response or results, so I gave up. Unconnected to personal experience, family, or neighborhood, the Christian God and the Bible didn't interest me.

When we got home from church, I took off my good clothes (hot, itchy gabardine pants, starched white shirt, and socks and shoes), put on my blue jeans with rolled-up cuffs and a T-shirt, and went out barefooted to climb trees. Years later my mother told me she never believed in God, but took us to church to expose us to Christianity (just as she exposed us to art and piano lessons). As adults, if we chose to, we could then select Christianity from the menu of religions, which also included Buddhism. By the time we got to high school, she felt she had exposed us to enough religion (and it wasn't making us more obedient), so she stopped taking us to church. I ended up not adopting any formal religion or god.

My father never came to church with us. Dressed in his khaki shorts (old pants, the legs cut off, unhemmed and frayed), an old white T-shirt with holes in it, and slippers, he spent his weekends fishing or building boats in our yard. The first two boats he built, a fourteen-footer and a twenty-two-footer, were equipped with outboard motors he stored in our garage on wooden racks.

Later, after he and my mother bought a three-bedroom house in a subdivision a mile away from Kea'ahala Road, he built a thirty-foot boat with an inboard diesel engine. It slowly took shape over three years, from plans he had ordered in the mail. An unfiltered cigarette hanging from his lips, wisps of smoke rising like dragon's breath, he cut lumber; assembled the pieces with nails, screws, and glue; fiber-glassed the wood; and installed the huge engine. He guzzled a case of Primo beer a day on weekends and was still steady enough in the afternoon to hammer nails without bending them, and cut straight with a power saw along a penciled line while sawdust flew up, sticking to the sheen of sweat on his sun-darkened arms and face. His two fishing partners, the Hiroshige brothers, and my brother and I, helped him with the work. The job we hated most was sanding fiberglass: the little fibers of glass stuck in our skin and made us itchy.

My father moored his boats at He'eia Kea Pier in Kāne'ohe Bay. He was a fisher of fish, not of men. We grew up on the seafood he brought home – 'ōmaka, moano, uhu, pāpio, kona crabs, 'ula'ula, 'ehu, 'ōpaka-paka, hapu'u, 'ahi, aku, mahimahi, and ono.

From him I learned to love the ocean. When I was four or five years old, he dropped me into the murky green water off the pier, ten yards from shore, then walked around to some rocks and told me to come toward him. I dog-paddled

over, easily. I've enjoyed swimming in the tropical ocean ever since – the buoyancy a relief from the weight of gravity. (In a faded Polaroid taken on Guam, where I was born, I'm sitting happily in small waves at the edge of a coral flat; in another, I'm sucking on a clam shell, annotated by my mother "chewing a shell. Enjoys the salt." She no longer remembers telling me once that bathing in saltwater was a recommended treatment for ringworm, which is why she took me to the beach.)

We swam at the pier at He'eia while waiting for my father to come in from fishing. A few times, mysteriously, large, stingless jellyfish would swarm in, and we swam among them and tossed them around like footballs. We could see their innards through their transparent rubbery bodies.

In 1958, a shark bit off a boy's leg near Mokulua in Kailua and the boy bled to death in the water; shark hunting was conducted. One day a sampan brought in a fifteen-foot tiger shark to the pier. The shark was hung from a hoist by its tail, its body sagging like a drop of oil; it seemed to have an odd, humiliated grin on its face, exposing its pointed teeth.

My father took us crabbing in the shallow muddy waters off of Kāne'ohe Beach Park, using round crab nets baited with bloody aku heads and guts we bought at Honda Store. We cooked the haole and Sāmoan crabs on the beach and ate them. We also went torch fishing in his boat inside the lagoon of Kāne'ohe Bay. Anchored at the edge of the reef, we waited for night, then lit gas lanterns to attract fish. We used bamboo poles and hand lines to hook 'ōmaka, mamo, manini, and kīkākapu, which was a favorite though it had very little meat to offer. When we were older my father took my brother and me out beyond the reef, past the last buoy, to troll. We looked for birds. The noio, a tern, gathers in piles above schools of aku, diving for the small fish that the aku chase to the surface; the larger boobies, indicate a school of mahimahi feeding beneath them.

On these trips outside the bay, I discovered the misery of seasickness. The undulating surface washed by the blazing sun offered no stable reference points; the blue-green water absorbed sunlight, and my eyes got lost, with nothing to focus on, no firm contours, uncertain where the bottom was. The boat pitched and rolled with the swells, the horizon rising and falling. I got disoriented. The engine droned, emitting noxious fumes. My stomach tightened around its emptiness. I sought refuge in the cabin from the heat, the rocking horizon, the nauseating fumes, getting up only to retch before returning to lie down and dream of the stable green island floating seemingly far, far away.

By the time I got to the ninth grade, I no longer wanted to go deep-sea fishing with my father and his two buddies, and took up surfing instead. The near shore waters were not as rough as the open ocean, and a surfboard emitted no fumes. I started a surf club with some schoolmates, and we taught ourselves to surf in the shore breaks at Kahana Bay and Kailua, then moved on to bigger, steeper waves. Ala Moana Park off the tennis courts, where the waves broke right and left, was our home break. My mother dropped us off

there on weekends. Later, when my brother's high school friends got cars, we went wherever the surf was up – Keawa'ula, Hale'iwa, the cliffs of Lae'ahi. We lived by the seasons of waves, hitching rides on swells generated by trade winds or by winter storms moving eastward across the northern and southern Pacific. Hawai'i was blessed with waves almost all year long.

As we grew up, the local knowledge we acquired from exploring our world was overlaid with various forms of cultural knowledge we got from school, the media, and family. Our first-grade reader was about Dick, Jane, Sally, and their dog, Spot. Most of the kids on Kea'ahala Road didn't look like, speak like, or act like the kids depicted in the books, but almost everyone had a pet dog.

On television we watched the slapstick of Daffy Duck, Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny, and the Three Stooges, learning from these cartoon characters how to tease and torment each other. We watched the happy-ending family shows like *Leave it to Beaver*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, and *Father Knows Best*; and police dramas (*The Untouchables*, *Dragnet*) and Westerns (*Have Gun, Will Travel*, *Rawhide*) in which good triumphed over bad. On weekend afternoons we entered the cool cavern of Kāne'ohe Theater on Kamehameha Highway, next to Soeda's Gas Station, to watch Hollywood fantasies for young boys – cowboy movies, war movies, and monster movies mainly, climaxing with violence and killing enemies and bizarre-looking creatures. We were being programmed to become citizens and soldiers for a far-off place called America, where everything was good. Could life really be that simple and simple-minded?

Immigrants from Japan, my grandparents brought with them their nineteenth and early twentieth-century Japanese culture to Hawai'i. When my Hilo grandmother (my mother's mother) visited for the summer, she took us to samurai and obake movies, which played on Tuesday nights at the theater. The samurai movies were violent like Westerns, but with heroes using swords instead of guns and with Confucian themes of loyalty to one's lord, honor, and revenge. The obake movies featured white-faced female ghosts with long black hair returning from the misty land of the dead to avenge themselves on the living.

The obake movies gave us the willies on our walk home in the dark past a huge banyan tree with shadowy branches and roots hanging above the road in front of the Higashi Hongwanji church. This was an old dwelling reassembled near the theater by plantation workers in 1924 and moved to Kea'ahala Road in 1929. The bishop of Honolulu sent priests over the old Pali road to Kāne'ohe to conduct services. For a short time, my brother, sister, and I went to after-school Japanese language classes held in hollow tile classrooms. But we complained to my mother that the rote lessons were boring, and she let us quit after we told her we would come home from school to do our English homework.

Our family was nominally Buddhist, but the only time we had to go to church was when someone died. At these funerals, the priest chanted, occasionally striking a bronze bowl with a wooden stick. We approached the altar and sprinkled incense into a bowl, then bowed to the golden statue of Buddha. The chanting was incomprehensible, and the adults didn't bother to explain the rituals; everything seemed merely perfunctory. Like Christianity, Buddhism was unconnected to the world around me.

At home we read Shintō folktales about badger, fox, monkey, sparrow, sea turtle, and other animal spirits. Much later, in college, I read Shintō mythology, which is based on the belief that nature, particularly extraordinary manifestations of mountains, rocks, clouds, rivers, waterfalls, plants, animals, and people, are kami, or spirits. This folk religion celebrates life and encourages worshipers to act for the benefit of and with gratitude to the community of multitudinous kami and people (ancestors and future generations included) who make one's well-being and happiness possible. The emotional foundation of Shintō is a reverence for the productive forces of nature, which is pure and innocent (no Original Sin, no need for redemption); and an abhorrence of impurity associated with decaying dead things.

The Shintō creation myth tells of siblings Izanagi and Izanami giving birth to the islands of Japan and its nature spirits; their grandchildren gave birth to the Japanese people, and in the next generation, the first emperor was born. When Izanami dies giving birth to the fire god, Izanagi goes to find her in the underworld and flees in horror and disgust from her maggoty, putrefying corpse.

From infancy, probably through my parents' and grandparents' influences, I internalized Shintō's reverence for nature and ancestors and its abhorrence of decay. On Kea'ahala Road I encountered decay in the form of a dog that had been hit by a car. Its body was split open, and its guts were crawling with maggots. I was repulsed by the sight and the nauseating stench. Izanagi washed himself in the Woto river in Kyūshū to remove the defilement of decay and death. When I stepped into rotten mangoes or dog shit (which seemed all over the place on Kea'ahala Road), I purified my foot with the clear, cold water from the pipe at the front porch.

My parents never encouraged or forced us to learn our ancestral language, history, and culture while we were growing up. Our Japanese heritage had been a stigma during and after War World II. Japanese immigrants and their children had to deny ancestral loyalties and ties for fear of being identified with the enemy and reviled as "Japs." After Japanese warplanes bombed Pearl Harbor, my mother's family hid a projector and some films of parties that my grandfather, a merchant, hosted for the crews of Japanese ships visiting Hilo.

But even without the war, Japanese traditions would have begun to pass with the passing of generations. In this new country, ancestral religion,

heritage, and language didn't seem to matter much for our survival or well-being. The ancestral gods belonged to another place, and the ancestral religion might be a hindrance to assimilation and success in the new country, so many immigrants adopted the religion of the majority, Christianity, as a sign of their new American identity.

V.S. Naipaul notes a similar loss of culture among the East Indian community founded by immigrants who went to work on sugar plantations in Trinidad and settled there during the nineteenth century:

> … separated from the Indian earth, Hindu theology had become difficult… ; faith had been half possessed by many, abandoned by many. It had been part of a general cultural loss, which had left many with no strong idea of who they were. (*India: A Million Mutinies Now)*

Derek Walcott, on the other hand, notes in his 1992 Nobel Prize speech that the Ramayana is still dramatized annually in a field in an "ocean of cane" in Trinidad and that while purists might see the performance as "parodic, even degenerate," he wants to see it not as a distortion or reduction of the original, but as an enduring and authentic profession of faith.

In Hawai'i, both Buddhism and Shintō have persisted among the descendants of Japanese immigrants, Buddhism more widely than Shintō, perhaps because it has a more universal appeal, not as dependent on sacred sites and local kami who live in another country.

What counted most for my grandparents and parents in the new country was not ancestral culture or religion, but knowledge of English and Western culture and science, whose materialism and empiricism dismissed religious and spiritual beliefs as superstitions. If we acquired a Western education and entered professions, we could become members of the capitalist economy that was taking over the world. The benefits of joining and succeeding in this economy seemed unquestionable: it had developed the technology to impose its will on nature and people worldwide, and to produce and distribute enormous material wealth.

I felt the power of capitalism in Dote's Market, when I accompanied my mother on her weekly shopping trips. The seemingly endless variety and supply of food and goods fascinated me. The store was a magical cornucopia. I wandered up and down the aisles amazed at the boxes, bags, packages, cans, and bottles from all over the world, all stacked in rows and tiers, towering above me. Near the front of the store were bins full of vegetables and fruits, mainly grown elsewhere and imported to Hawai'i – apples, oranges, grapes, strawberries, potatoes, peaches, pumpkins, pears, artichokes, etc. I had never seen the plants on which these vegetables and fruits grew, but I knew how the produce tasted.

At the back of the store was the meat display, cooled by refrigeration, its

glass window misty with humidity condensate. Alongside the cuts of beef, lamb, pork, and chicken, I sometimes recognized the fish my father had sold to Mr. Dote the previous day to pay for the equipment and gas he needed to catch the fish.

I was in awe of my mother's ability to choose whatever she wanted from the shelves and bins, fill a shopping cart, pay for it with a twenty dollar bill, and bring it all home in brown paper bags. I helped her carry the bags in and put the goods away in our cabinets and refrigerator.

My grandparents joined the global economy when they left the rice fields of Hiroshima to start new lives in the immigrant worker communities forming around Hawai'i's sugar and pineapple plantations. My maternal grandfather established a wholesale and retail grocery and dry goods operation in Hilo, providing supplies for working communities on the Hāmākua coast; my paternal grandfather worked as a clerk and delivery man for a plantation store, then bought some land in my father's name across the road from a pineapple cannery in Kuiaha, Maui. He and his picture-bride wife built a store and restaurant, which my grandmother ran. Both grandfathers had the same dream: to make money so that they could send their children to college to become professionals. While they were successful in business, they didn't want their children to go into business. In their eyes, running a business was endless work and full of uncertainties and anxieties; it was safer and more prestigious to be in a profession. They considered businessmen of a lower social status than professionals with degrees because of the Confucian respect for education and prejudice against trade and money.

My parents carried out their parents' dream by graduating from college and pursuing professions. My father got a degree in electrical engineering, my mother in dietetics. We children were encouraged to follow the same path through college and go further, to get master's or doctoral degrees. We, too, ended up carrying out our grandparents' and parents' dream: my brother became an engineer, my sister an orthodontist, I a college teacher and administrator.

After high school graduation in 1969, I left Kāne'ohe for college and travel. Under the spell of Euro-American capitalist mythology, I had come to believe that a meaningful life involved some kind of journey away from home and family, that to fully realize myself, I had to pursue a career or become famous or at least live in some center of politics and culture in the Western world, preferably New York, London, or Paris.

In the early 1970s, between semesters at the University of Hawai'i, I flew to San Francisco and headed for New York by Greyhound, having said farewell to my family and thinking I would go to school and live on my own. The bus route went through landscapes and towns I had heard about only in

cowboy movies – Sacramento, Reno, Winnemucca, Salt Lake City, Rawlins, Cheyenne, North Platte, Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha, Des Moines, and Davenport. The people I met had unfamiliar names, accents, and interests; I had conversations and overheard talk in diners and bus stops about lives with pasts and futures unconnected to mine. Like the bus-travelers in Simon and Garfunkel's "America," I was lost, looking for an America I had only imagined. The dusty landscape after the Rockies was flat and dreary. And there was no ocean, which disoriented me, so used to mauka and makai. A May blizzard swept the plains as the Greyhound rolled across Nebraska and Iowa.

In Chicago I bought a book of poems by Jorge Luis Borges; a haole high school teacher I had a crush on had introduced me to the Argentinian writer after graduation, loaning me her copy of *Labyrinths*. The clerk at the bookstore near Lake Michigan, a middle-aged white woman with a Midwestern accent, used the phrase "your people" when talking to me, as if we belonged to different tribes; and I guess we did. I liked Borges' early poetry a lot. One of the poems, translated as "Plainness," was about home: how the garden gate opens with the ease of an oft-consulted book, and inside we find familiar customs and a dialect of allusions, a sense of belonging to "an undeniable Reality," like stones and trees. I decided to head back home – via Madison, La Cross, St. Paul-Minneapolis, Fargo, Bismark, Billings, Boseman, Butte, Kellogg, Spokane, and Seattle, where a friend from childhood through high school was attending the University of Washington. "Plainness" remained a favorite poem of mine for years.

In the late 1970s, as I was finishing coursework for a Ph.D. in English at the University of Washington, I was supposed to send out resumes, go to job interviews, and move and settle wherever I was offered the best-paying, most-appealing job. Instead, before completing my degree, I returned to Hawai‘i and found a job teaching at Kapi‘olani Community College in Honolulu.

In 1986, I moved to San Francisco. After two years of teaching as a lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley and City College, I returned to Hawai‘i again.

Going away and coming back helped me to realize how rooted I was in Hawai‘i. A profession was not enough of an identity for me; I needed to feel at home in a particular place in the world. I wanted to live among family and friends, among people I've known since childhood. I enjoy running into or hearing gossip about schoolmates or friends whom I haven't seen for a year, or five or ten or twenty, noting how we have changed or not changed, and talking about whether what happened in the intervening time is what we might have expected or not. We've become mirrors of each other's growth, achievements, frailties, aging, and mortality.

I like living in a place I know well enough that I might get something to eat from the land or sea. Not that I dream of fishing for a living as my father did. My education prepared me to live an urban life and buy food at

supermarkets and restaurants. I became a fisher and purveyor of thoughts, ideas, and information instead of real fish. But I feel secure knowing of a spot ten miles away on the reef in Kāneʻohe Bay where moano might be teeming; or of a ravine in Kawailoa or a gully in Kahana, where the mountain apple trees should be full of sweet, juicy red fruit in August. I like living in terrain marked by experience in memory.

Gary Snyder explains the special attachment we feel for the landscape of childhood:

> All of us carry within us a picture of the terrain that was learned roughly between the ages of six and nine. You can almost totally recall the place you walked, played, biked, swam. Revisualizing that place with its smells and textures, walking through it again in your imagination, has a grounding and settling effect.

Living in one's childhood landscape through adolescence and adulthood is even more grounding and settling than just revisualizing it while living somewhere else; we add layers of experience onto the childhood terrain as we grow and age.

The landscapes of Oʻahu offers emotional satisfactions to me through memories of firsts – the first mango and mountain apple picked and eaten; the first swim in the ocean; the first fish hooked in Kāneʻohe Bay; the first wave surfed at Ala Moana; the first love-making atop Puʻu ʻŌhiʻa, the first hikes along the cloudy, boggy summit trails of the Koʻolaus; the first interisland channel crossing on a voyaging canoe.

Of course, places change. And seeing them changing quickly and perhaps for the worse – more crowds and cars, more buildings and subdivisions, fewer fruit trees and fish – can also bring a deep sense of loss.

I was reminded of the deep connections among identity, terrain, and food by a description of the sacred song of a clan in Australia:

> Karora, the ancestor of the bandicoot clan, has his own verses which he is believed to have composed, which describe himself and the place near where he originated; also the trees and rocks growing near his home, the animals nearby, the strangers who visited him; his wanderings and quest for food, and what happened when the time came for him to pass into his deep sleep. (Gunner)

Such knowledge of place, once taken for granted as essential to survival, is less valued today. Snyder observes that the leaders of modern civilizations "grew up with less and less personal knowledge of animal behavior and were no longer taught the intimate wide-ranging plant knowledge that had once been universal. By way of trade-off they learned 'human management,'

administration, and rhetorical skills." He chides, "Most contemporary Americans don't even know they don't 'know the plants' which indeed is a measure of alienation."

But while local knowledge acquired from living in the same place over a lifetime no longer seems necessary for day-to-day living, such knowledge is just as important for the long-term survival of a community as other kinds of knowledge. Local knowledge keeps us aware of changes as we recall what places were like years and decades earlier. And beyond that, we need to know what places were like before we were born, in generations past; what changes have taken place; what actions and events have contributed to the well-being of the place and the community (and who we should appreciate and honor); what actions and events have made it worse; what effect our own presence and actions have had. We acquire such knowledge from staying rooted and learning about local history and traditions. Without this knowledge, how can we determine what might be good or bad for the future?

During and after my university education, I began to feel a disconnection between the knowledge I acquired in school and from the media, and the place I lived in and the people I lived with. If family, community, and home were important to me, why wasn't I taught more about them in school? I felt an imbalance: too much of my education was about people and places far away, not enough about home. We studied no local history or literature in high school, and at the university my education in English was Eurocentric.

My local knowledge felt incomplete, lacking the range, depth, and detail of researched and written knowledge we studied at school. I wanted to acquire more knowledge about home – its history, its stories, its sacred places – and to reflect on how to live well in this island home. I began reading local history in general and the history of the Japanese immigration to Hawai'i in particular and asking older family members about their experiences here; later, when I began studying Western literature, I took an interest in reading literature by Asian American writers and local writers. Eventually my interest turned to the study of native Hawaiian literature.

Writers like Naipaul and Jamaica Kincaid have documented the alienating, destructive effects of a colonial education: by ignoring or demeaning indigenous and local knowledge and non-Western ancestral traditions, colonial teachers have made the colonized feel inadequate and inferior about their origins and homelands.

Naipaul was raised in Trinidad, an island north of Venezuela, where, as in Hawai'i, sugar plantations were plotted and plowed into the tropical landscape. The owners brought slaves from Africa, and after slavery was abolished in 1834, immigrant contract labor to work the plantations. One

of these indentured workers was Naipaul's paternal grandfather, a Hindu of the Brahmin class from northern India who arrived in Port of Spain in the 1880s. Naipaul's father, like my father and mother's generation in Hawai'i, took advantage of opportunities to advance in colonial society; he became a journalist and writer. Naipaul's mother was a descendent of East Indians as well, her family owning land and a quarry on the island.

After excelling in colonial schools, Naipaul left at eighteen for University College at Oxford in England and never returned to live in Trinidad. In *Beyond Belief*, he tells us that he felt that the place where he grew up was small, empty, and incomplete. At first, he attributes his feelings to the heat and geography: "I used to feel that the climate had burnt away history and possibility. This feeling might have had to do with the smallness of the island, which we all used to say was only a dot on the map of the world." (I've heard similar comments made about the climate and geography of Hawai'i, by people who have left or plan to leave.)

Later, Naipaul speculates that it was his immigrant background that made him feel inadequate – the lack of extended family and ancestors, the fact that the past "stopped abruptly with a father or grandfather"; or because his immigrant ancestors were indentured, "I carried in my bones that idea of abjectness and defeat and shame." "[The] agricultural colony, in effect a plantation," he writes, "honored neither land nor people."

In *Middle Passage*, about a trip he takes to the West Indies and South America, Naipaul expresses his utter contempt for the colonial society and people of his home island: "Like monkeys pleading for evolution, each claiming to be whiter than the others, [East] Indians and Negroes appeal to the unacknowledged white audience to see how much they despise one another." His book, written for a white audience, expresses the self-contempt he attributes to other colonials. And it is clear from his descriptions of the "wild Indians" he encounters that he grew up in fear and ignorance of the indigenous people of the region.

Still later in his life, Naipaul began to glimpse another explanation for feeling that his home island was small and inferior: what was lacking in Trinidad was not the fault of the island, but a defect in his colonial education. While visiting a sacred place of the Minangkabau people in Western Sumatra, Naipaul wonders why he knew of no such places in Trinidad. He recalls "rocks with crude pre-Columbian carvings … hidden in a canefield" on the island of St. Kitts and a story about how natives from South America came in canoes to Trinidad and "performed certain rites or made offerings" in the hills, gathered fruits, and returned to the continent. But, he confesses, "I wasn't of an age to want to ask more or to find out more, and the unfinished, unexplained story now is like something in a dream, an elusive echo from another kind of consciousness."

Why hadn't he been taught more in school about the traditions of his home

island? Because, he explains, "the aboriginal people who knew about the sacred places had been destroyed on our island, and instead of them there were – in the plantation colony – people like us [descendants of Europeans, Africans, and Asians], whose sacred places were in other continents." Uneducated about the place where he grew up, contemptuous of its people, cut off from his ancestral past, uncomfortable in the country where he resides, Naipaul doesn't feel at home anywhere. His Nobel Prize biography notes that he "is unhappy about the cultural and spiritual poverty of Trinidad, he feels alienated from India, and in England he is incapable of relating to and identifying with the traditional values of what was once a colonial power."

After his first visit to India in 1962, Naipaul dismissed his ancestral homeland as "an area of darkness"; after a second visit, twenty-seven years later, he writes that he succeeded in "abolishing the darkness that separated me from my ancestral past." During this return visit, he finds that India has "progressed" and feels more comfortable with the country and its people. Still, he writes about India not as one rooted or centered there, but as an outsider, his observations and beliefs having been shaped not by the Indian reality, but by his colonial education in Trinidad and his upbringing in an immigrant Brahmin family.

In *Beyond Belief* and his earlier book *Among the Believers*, Naipaul is highly critical of Islam, whose conquests and conversions of peoples in Asia destroyed indigenous cultures and their sacred places. About Pakistan he writes:

> All the history of the ancient land would cease to matter. In the school history books, or the school 'civics' books, the history of Pakistan would become only an aspect of the history of Islam. The Muslim invaders, and especially the Arabs, would become the heroes of the Pakistan story. The local people would be hardly there, in their own land, or would be there only as ciphers swept aside by the agents of the faith. (*Beyond Belief*)

While Naipaul has been criticized for his anti-Islamic prejudices, the problem is not that what he writes here isn't true; it's that he should have said it about not just Islamic colonizers, but about all colonizers. Most books produced by Western scholars, Christian and non-Christian, including Naipaul's writings on Trinidad, have been just as destructive culturally to indigenous peoples and cultures as Islamic writings. The works of these scholars, served up in schools and universities around the globe, are as monocultural and fundamentalist as the works of Islam Naipaul is criticizing.

Universalist belief systems like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, capitalism, and Western civilization have used the power of mass-printed texts and, more recently, networks of audiovisual media to spread across vast territories and gain converts. Conversion doesn't require a person to be related by blood

to the peoples among whom the belief systems originated, or to live in any particular place. Abstractions like god, good and evil, property and money, truth and beauty can be applied in any place. And those who live solely by such abstractions can live anywhere, even if they feel at home nowhere.

Like Naipaul, Jamaica Kincaid was educated to believe that her people and her home island, the former British slave-colony of Antigua, were inferior and small. From a family of African ancestry and slave heritage, she notes in "On Seeing England for the First Time" that when she was a child, the word "England" made her feel "awe at its existence, small because I was not from it." Taught a British history that portrayed her people as savages and slaves, she felt as if she were "nothing" – "incomplete, without substance." When she visited England for the first time, she was overwhelmed by resentment, outrage, and hatred toward the country and its people; she felt like tearing England to pieces and crumbling "it up as if it were clay, child's clay." She expresses what James Baldwin calls "the rage of the disesteemed," which is rooted in powerlessness.

Like Naipaul, Kincaid couldn't stand to live on her home island; but unlike Naipaul, she couldn't bear to live in the Mother Country either. In "Alien Soil," she notes that "the trees so familiar to me from my childhood in Antigua do not now have a hold on me" because she associates them – bougainvillea from South America, plumbago from Africa, croton from Malay, mango from South Asia, breadfruit from the East Indies – with the history of colonialism and the racial and economic oppression she experienced as a child. Rejecting both England and Antigua, she settles in Vermont, where, on alien soil, she finds the freedom to appreciate nature's beauty in flowers and trees there and to pursue her passion for botany and gardening.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Hawai'i, like Trinidad and Antigua, was transformed into a multiethnic society by Western settlers. By the second half of the nineteenth century, as the indigenous population declined from introduced diseases and poor health care, immigrant workers, mainly from Asia, were brought in and increased in numbers so that eventually they outnumbered the native population. As in many places in the world today, in Hawai'i you are more likely to meet someone of non-indigenous than of indigenous ancestry. In the 2000 census, about twenty percent of the population reported indigenous ancestry; forty-four percent of the population had been born elsewhere; eighteen percent were foreign-born. (Perhaps the percentage of those with indigenous ancestry is somewhat higher, ancestral links lost in the tumble of interethnic marriage and adoptions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and by the middle of the twenty-first century, given the relatively high rate of interethnic marriages in Hawai'i, the majority of people whose families have been in the islands for multiple generations will have

some, though very few would have only, indigenous blood.)

For transplants and immigrants and their descendents and for many of mixed ancestry, the traditional unity of race, homeland, culture, and language (the monocultural myth that many still see as determining identity) no longer works. The possibility of this identity was lost to me when my grandparents left Japan. What is my language and culture? Not those of my Japanese ancestors. Where is my homeland? Not their homeland. And my race? Not their race. When they left Japan they severed my connection to the ancestral language, culture, and mythologies, as well as the local experiences of their childhoods. (What trees had they climbed, to pick what fruits? What rivers and bays had they explored, what fish caught and eaten?)

Hawai‘i today is a microcosm of multicultural societies forming all over the world, where immigrants, refugees, and transplants are shaping new identities in new homelands, and indigenous peoples face an onslaught of peoples of different ethnicities and cultures displacing them and transforming their homelands into something new.

Some immigrants, like Pico Iyer, have embraced a new multicultural identity, moving with apparent ease and comfort from place to place, culture to culture. Of East Indian ancestry, raised in England, then California, choosing to spend time in Japan while traveling the world, Iyer writes about experiences in Ethiopia, Nepal, Tibet, New York, India – an instant expert from observations of multicultural surfaces in each place he visits. In “Welcome to the Age of Tropical Classical,” he celebrates California’s “cross-fertilizing” “polyglot multiculturalism,” “wherein a Pakistani can talk with a Mexican in a Chinese restaurant and Native American moccasins are made in Taiwan.” A privileged global citizen, he accepts the notions of cultural diversity and home as anywhere he feels “centered,” whether it is a monastery “outside of time” in California, where he meets “Buddhist nuns and Oxford scholars” in retreat, or in some other spiritual place or experience.

Iyer contrasts Naipaul, “stiffly immured inside his Wiltshire cottage … refining the West Indies (and the East) out of himself,” to a multiculturalist like Derek Walcott, “a Dutch African born in British Saint Lucia,” who “shuttles back and forth between the islands and Massachusetts,” where he teaches, juxtaposing Greek and African gods in his poetry and “invigorating the classical forms he learned at school with his own West Indian words and names, while at the same time dignifying his beloved Caribbean with a classical high voice,” lamenting the lost of the indigenous tribes, but celebrating a new Caribbean culture that has grown from the Asian, African, and European roots of its people.

Walcott grafts Western allusions onto Caribbean places and peoples, likening Port of Prince to Athens or finding Helen of Troy in Santa Lucia. In “At Last,” he lambastes Naipaul: “You spit on your people / Your people applaud, / Your former oppressors laurel you. / The thorns biting your forehead / Are contempt / Disguised as concern.” Walcott offers the reader who doesn’t

share his world of experience (and not many do) a multiculture made of words and images of many places, no longer of one particular neighborhood that writer and reader share, where both might encounter the referents of language. For a reader like me, Walcott's is a poetry of allusions to multiple elsewheres (and my own writing, for most, would read as such.)

To be rooted is perhaps the most important
and least recognized need of the human soul.

—Simone Weil

Travels, readings, and experiences have made me a part of the multicultural world Pico Iyer describes. In my studio apartment in Makiki, along with koa and milo wood bowls and paintings, photographs and ceramic work by native and local artists like de Silva, Landgraf, Hamasaki, and Hokushin are Buddhist calligraphy from my grandparents and souvenirs and gifts from all over the world – stone fetish figures and pottery from the American Southwest; stylized depictions of killer whales in prints, cedar masks of hawk-man and frog-man, and eagle and raven feathers from British Columbia and Alaska; a jaguar-man mask and miniature figures painted with vegetable dyes from Mexico; an armadillo carved from the limestone of Yucatan; coconuts from the Marquesas incised with porpoises and human faces; a finely carved wooden moko from Rapanui, from an indigenous Catholic priest; a small wooden monkey from the Shintō shrine at Ise.

Most of the plants in the landscape outside were brought to Hawai'i from other places – shade and ornamental trees like the monkey pod, the royal palm, and the shower tree, and fruit trees like the mango, the guava, and the Java plum. These imports have replaced the plants brought by kānaka maoli on voyaging canoes or that were carried here in pre-human times by winds, ocean currents, or birds.

One morning, a flock of never-before-seen-or-heard green parrots flew by my balcony, joining the manu-o-Kū, or white terns, and nineteenth and twentieth-century arrivals like the mynahs, doves, sparrows, and rice birds.

One night a friend invited me to go sucker-fish hunting with him in Nu'uanu stream. He was going to sell the fish he caught to an aquarium shop. There were no sucker-fish in the streams during my childhood. The fish we caught back then – mosquito fish, swordtails, and guppies – were introduced in the nineteenth century, the mosquito fish to eat larvae of the mosquito, a pest that arrived in Hawai'i in water barrels aboard sailing ships in the early nineteenth century.

The sucker-fish was brought to Hawai'i by aquarium shops in the 1980s. These large, grotesque brown catfish were dumped into streams when they were no longer wanted, and flourished, their large sucker-mouths making them well-suited for life in the fast-water running down from mountains to sea. That

night, in half-an-hour, wading upstream with a scoop net, John caught fifteen fish – one over ten inches long.

In the new century, a small, high-pitched frog that hitched here on lā‘au malihini from Puerto Rico spreads through the islands, singing neighborhoods awake at night.

Still, with all that is new and changing, there are enduring elements in the islands – the land forms and rocks; the ocean swells and waves, the winds, rains, clouds and mists; the weather and seasons. I feel familiarly attached to these. Unlike Iyer, I don't feel at home anywhere and everywhere. Unlike Naipaul and Kincaid, I didn't experience my home island as small, poor, empty, incomplete, or unreal. Hawai‘i feels rich and full; what is real to me are the beaches and ocean where we swim, fish, surf, and sail; the places where we picnic or camp; the mountains where we hike; the trees we climb; the local fish and fruits we eat. What we learn in school and from the media about the world beyond is interesting, often fascinating, but not as fundamental or real as what we experience.

My choice to remain rooted in the islands where I grew up is a privilege made possible by the hard work of my family and community. When I reflect on my grandparents' decision to leave their ancestral homeland – a tremendous break – I wonder, if I were in their circumstances, would I have made the same decision? Or would I have chosen to remain with the ancestral spirits in the homeland? And given the changes and uncertainties of our global age, would there come a time when I might feel compelled to move away from Hawai‘i? Many have already departed seeking better jobs, new homes, new destinies elsewhere: about a third of those born in Hawai‘i during the past two decades are gone. Snyder writes:

> For most Americans, to reflect on "home place" would be an unfamiliar exercise. Few today can announce themselves as someone from somewhere. Almost nobody spends a lifetime in the same valley, working alongside the people they knew as children. (*The Practice of the Wild)*

The song of the immigrant who seeks a better life in another country is often one of nostalgic longing for what has been left behind – a childhood and familiar foods, places, family, and friends; perhaps a rural past and ancestral traditions. These are replaced by an urban present and future in which the immigrant doesn't quite feel at home. Everton Sylvester, an immigrant poet living in New York City, writes in "dilly dally":

> I rise each day
> To yet another shock
> From dis alarm-clock culture.
> And I miss de sound

Of my big red cock
As him beat him chest
And crow welcome song
To de sun
From de fowl-shit covered
Guava tree pon de hillside.

Everton has tasted the fruit of the Big Apple, but misses the indigenous guava; he worries that the more apples he eats from the bins at the Korean grocer's store, the more likely he will "dilly dally" in America, living ambivalently, the less likely he will find his way home:

Cause each time I bite de apple
It swallow a piece of me
Still it hard to love de fruit
If I never did climb de tree.

In the mid-1980s, when I was in my 30s, Esther "Kiki" Mookini, a Hawaiian language teacher at the college where I teach, introduced me to a vast collection of native traditions, recorded by indigenous scholars and published in newspapers and books in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – knowledge and wisdom gathered during two hundred generations of living in the islands.

Excited by the possibility of acquiring some of the indigenous knowledge I had missed while being educated in colonial schools, I began reading as many works in translation as I could find in the library and bookstores. The stories weren't about my ancestors: Papa and Wākea, the earth mother and sky father of chiefly Hawaiian and Polynesian genealogies and creation stories, are as alien to me as Adam and Eve. But the stories of the Hawaiian gods, demigods, and ancestral spirits, unlike Biblical, Buddhist, or Shintō stories, were full of allusions to, information about, insights into the place I call home; they taught me things about Hawai'i that no other kinds of stories could.

Haunani K. Trask points out that colonial scholars have distorted native history, turning a "rich historical past" into something "small and ignorant." Colonial educators in Hawai'i, like those in Trinidad and Antigua, have made many native and local residents feel small and insecure in our island home. This smallness is a state of the imagination imposed on the colonized by the colonizer. If we are taught the place we live in or who we are is not important, if our ancestors and heritages are ignored or demeaned in what we study, we end up believing that we are insignificant and inferior.

Epeli Hau'ofa, whose ancestors are from Tonga (islands physically small, but never colonized), writes that his ancestors, in their myths and cosmologies, conceive of their island world in a grand way:

… comprised not only of land surfaces, but also the surrounding ocean

> as far as they could traverse and exploit it, the underworld with its fire-controlling and earth-shaking denizens, and the heavens above with their hierarchies of powerful gods and named stars and constellations that people could count on to guide their way across the seas. Their world was anything but tiny. They thought big and recounted their deeds in epic proportions.

In their epics and cosmologies, kānaka maoli conceive of their homeland in the same grand way. Hawai‘i is center, not periphery. Native stories and chants praise the beauty and richness of the islands – the steep green pali of the Ko‘olau mountains of Kāne‘ohe; the wild rocky coastlines and seas of Makapu‘u famous for its uhu, or parrot fish; the rainy, rainbow-filled, kalo-planted valleys of Honolulu. These stories brought the landscapes of my childhood to life in my imagination, making them grander than my personal experiences of them, with ancient histories extending into a mythic past and spiritual realms unseen. The stories identify spirits that dwell in, on, above, and below the land and sea. Kāne, the god of life and life-giving water, is in stone, whirlwind, rainbow, star, owl, bamboo, and pōpolo, and in rain and rain-clouds:

> Where is the water of Kāne?
> Over the near-shore sea, over the far sea,
> in the wind-blown rain at sea, in the rainbow,
> in the reddish billowing cloud, in the low red rainbow,
> in the low hanging clouds,
> There is the water of Kāne.

I was excited and awe-struck by towering orographic clouds forming over the summits of the Ko‘olaus, high clouds sailing in trade winds above Honolulu, and dark low clouds from the west bringing the long winter rains that flooded the streams. There was something mysterious in the clouds and rains, something spiritual and sacred. The chant of Kāne gave this spirit a local god-name. And Kāne is just one of the four thousand gods, the forty thousand gods, the four hundred thousand gods, each representing some life-giving aspect of the land or sea: Lono, Kanaloa, Kū, Hāloa, Pele, Hi‘iaka, Laka, Kamapua‘a, Māui, Kaulu, La‘amaomao, Kū‘ula-kai, ‘Ai‘ai, Maikohā. Later I recognized the similarity between these local nature gods of Hawai‘i and the kami of Japan. My family and teachers knew little or nothing about the Hawaiian gods; but these gods are the local, enduring spirits of the place I call home. I didn’t feel a need to worship them, so much as respectfully acknowledge their presence.

Snyder, like Naipaul, has noted the lack of indigenous traditions and sacred places in his home in the Sierra Nevadas of northern California; unlike

Naipaul, he looks forward to their recovery:

> The original people here, the Nisenan …were almost entirely displaced or destroyed during the first few decades of the gold rush. It seems there is no one left to teach us which places in this landscape were once felt to be 'sacred' – though with time and attention, I think we will be able to feel and find them again.

The "we" includes multiple future generations. The twenty or so years Snyder has spent in the Sierras at the time he wrote the essay is a very short period, not long enough for an individual or family to become rooted in a place, though it might be considered a beginning. (I laugh when I hear transplants to Hawai'i say they have been here a long time – five years. Five years? Try five generations, or fifty.)

Sacred places come into being from the experiences of people living dependent on the land and sea for many generations, with native sons and daughters telling and elaborating stories and passing them on to their children and grandchildren. And the sacred places may not be the same places forever – new ones emerging, old ones disappearing.

As I studied native traditions, I came to believe that the geographical knowledge and cultural values they embodied fit Hawai'i better than the knowledge and values we learned from Western culture; and that the way of life transplanted in Hawai'i by American colonizers was making the land and sea less healthy than they were in the past.

Makiki, where I live, is a typical urban residential neighborhood of the global capitalist economy. The terrain is dominated by buildings, mainly high-rise apartments like the one I live in. Property lines divide space and place so restrictively, children might find it difficult to explore or to walk anywhere other than in square blocks along sidewalks, or from block to block in crosswalks. Traffic is so heavy at rush hour, wandering could be hazardous to your health. It would never occur to me to go outside of my apartment to pick something to eat. The mango trees in the neighborhood are fenced-in, kapu to those who live outside the fence; and the apartment building I live in doesn't have any fruit trees in its asphalt parking lot.

Makiki stream, which has been converted into a concrete drainage ditch, formerly fed a productive irrigation system for raising kalo and freshwater fish ('o'opu, or gobey, and 'opae, or shrimp). Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa writes of her people: "The Hawaiian does not desire to conquer his elder female sibling, the 'Āina, but to take care of her, to cultivate her properly, and to make her beautiful with neat gardens and careful husbandry." The 'āina (literally, "that which feeds") is parent to all, every person a family member fed by its bounty. In 1792, Archibald Menzies, the naturalist aboard Vancouver's *Discovery* described the plantations inland from Waikīkī, fed by Makiki, Mānoa, and

Pālolo streams:

> We pursued a pleasing path back into the plantation, which was nearly level and very extensive, and laid out with great neatness into little fields planted with taro, yams, sweet potatoes, and the cloth plant. These, in many cases, were divided by little banks on which grew the sugar cane and a species of Draecena without the aid of much cultivation, and the whole was watered in a most ingenious manner by dividing the general stream into little aqueducts leading in various directions so as to supply the most distant fields at pleasure, and the soil seems to repay the labor and industry of these people by the luxuriancy of its production. (qtd. in Handy and Handy)

In 1831, the Russian traveler Kotzebue noted that fish for consumption was raised in the ponds for kalo:

> …The cultivation of the valleys behind Honolulu is remarkable; the artificial ponds support, even on the mountains, the kalo plantations which are at the same time fish ponds. (qtd. in Handy and Handy)

Today Makiki stream is polluted with garbage, trash, pesticides, and toxins from gasoline and automobiles. Health officials warn that any life-form caught in this stream, or any other in Honolulu, is hazardous to your health. My journey from Kea‘ahala Road to Makiki is on the trajectory of Hawai‘i and the planet’s journey from a rural past to an urban present and future. Makiki is a convenient place to live while working in the city, but not a place to raise children. It’s too easy to be detached from the land in a place like this, to live in the global multicultural world created by the media. At night we watch television images of people who live far away, not the local dance of clouds and stars above us; children kill aliens on computer screens in preparation for one day wiping out the unseen enemies of American capitalism with the push of a button.

The din of traffic is continuous from the streets and freeway; in the early morning before dawn, when thieves roam, cars lining the streets like alien beasts wail as their metal skins are violated. Meanwhile global temperatures are rising, melting the polar ice caps and the snows of Kilimanjaro; fisheries collapse; Brazilian and Indonesian rain forests are cut down; panda habitats shrink in China; and oil-drillers explore the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, set aside for now to protect polar bears, musk oxen, wolves, caribou, and millions of migratory birds.

Could the revival of native culture steer Hawai‘i toward a healthier future less dependent on the global economy? That doesn’t seem likely to me. Most of us have become too dependent on its goods and services to survive outside of it.

And as it spreads over more and more territory and consumes more and more of the world's resources to continue the expansion without which it would collapse, fewer and fewer people will find alternative ways of living feasible, even at its margins.

But given the anxieties and uncertainties of the modern age, it's comforting to me to imagine in an urban landscape, surrounded by streets and towers of capitalist wealth, the very different way of life that flourished here a mere two centuries ago. It seems important to keep indigenous traditions alive, in sacred spaces set apart from the modern world, and to pass the traditions on to future generations because like dormant seeds, given the right conditions, that way of life might flourish again in new and unimaginable ways. (One native Alaskan leader has said that his people are waiting for the tide of global capitalism to ebb in order to revive what is left of their traditional way of life.)

Midway through my life expectancy, in my 40s, swept along by a current in a direction I didn't want to go, I felt a need to create mental maps of where I had come from and to consider what I was doing here and why. In the context of world history, I wanted to make sense of my immigrant heritage and Japanese ancestry, my growing up and living in the islands, my Western education and career, my travels, and my studies of local and native history and culture. I wanted to see if it was possible to chart a course against the flow. As tentative maps emerged (these essays, written and rewritten), I found my prime meridian ran not through Greenwich, God, America, or the Bank of Hawai'i, but through the mango trees on Kea'ahala Road. In the deep, broad, confused, and confusing flux of our global age, these trees, alive in memory, served as a reference point from which to determine how far I'd traveled and which direction was home. (Four decades after we moved away from Kea'ahala Road, when I drove by the old house to photograph the trees, they were gone.)

Tribal Mix

War was ever present in our minds. My first and only toy was a miniature set of bows and arrows. …we would carve crude images from bark or wood and play at shooting a man.

—Albert Maori Kiki, *Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime*

Our favorite boyhood game was playing war. We stalked and ambushed each other in a field of tall California grass and haole koa bushes, using sticks as guns. On rainy days, under our house raised up on four-by-fours, empty oil drums and wooden crates became B-52s, Spitfires, Sherman Tanks. Snug in our World War II fantasies, we wiped out Nazis and Japs, voice-mimicking machine guns ra-tat-tat-tatting and bombs exploding.

No one wanted to die in these games. The rule was if you could see half of an enemy's body and shouted, "Ma-ke die dead!" that person was dead and had to sit out the rest of the war. But unless the killer surprised someone whose whole body was exposed, we argued back and forth about whether the shooter really saw half of his victim's body. The last resort was to point out that stick guns couldn't kill; then everyone went home. The next day the war games started up again.

Our tribe was multiethnic, made up of the boys who lived around Kea'ahala Road. Across from us lived the Hamocons; Lloyd, of Filipino-Japanese ancestry, was my best friend. Picking off our scabs, we intermingled our blood and became blood brothers, an idea we got from cowboys-killing-Indians movies.

The Keohokapus lived next to the Hamocons in a large, old two-story house on the hillside. Across the gravel lane from us were the Miyatas, whose mother baby-sat us. The Miyata boys, older than us, raised fighting fish and fighting cocks. One of the boys took me into the banana patch one day with a little white girl he had found somewhere and had us take off our clothes. He told me to lay on top of her; he looked to see if intercourse was possible for little children.

The Chatfields moved in after the Miyatas moved up the road. Mr. Chatfield was a marine officer stationed at the base on Mōkapu Peninsula. Charles, the son, had a thick Texas accent and owned a .22 rifle, which he told us he used to shoot rabbits in Texas. He never used his gun around Kea'ahala Road (no rabbits), but we were impressed that he had a real gun; we had only sticks and toys.

After the Chatfields left, the Souzas moved in. The youngest son, Boisse, played with us for a while, then was gone. We heard that he had died from a disease, after which his family moved away.

Over the chain-linked fence lived a Puerto Rican woman whose last name as Jesus. When I saw her name on the mailbox, I wondered if she was related to Christ. Her children were grown up and gone and we never saw a husband. We brought her green mangos from which she made preserved mango seed and gave us little packets of it wrapped in wax paper. She had an outdoor oven, made from a cut-open oil drum.

At Ben Parker Elementary School, my buddies were Kenneth, of Portuguese-Chinese ancestry, who lived nearby on Paleka Road; Alan, who was of Portuguese, Hawaiian, and Chinese ancestry, from Lilipuna Road; and Paul, who was Japanese-haole, from Waikalua Road. During recess and after school we became a band of cowboy brothers living on the Ponderosa Ranch.

The media introduced us to imaginary enemies we needed to killed: not just Japs and Nazis, but red coats, red skins, rebels, gangsters, monsters from outer space, all threats to the Order of Things, the neat grids of roads and buildings, the comfortable homes and happy families, freedom and the American Way. We were being indoctrinated with an us-against-them, kill-or-be-killed, survival-of-the-fittest mentality, so that when we grew up we would become good soldiers and fight the next war to make the world safe for American capitalism.

The main enemy back then were the Commies, with their sputnik lurking in space and nuclear missiles and bombs. When their fat, bald-headed leader was televised promising to bury us, I imagined myself a victim suffocating under radioactive rubble and dirt. Nuclear weapons were supposedly so devastating, few would survive the next war. At school, we practiced going under the desks to protect ourselves from the incinerating flash that could burn us into shadows on concrete. I didn't think that the desks would save us, but I played along.

We heard in the news about exemplary American families building underground concrete shelters stocked with canned goods and water to survive a nuclear war. I wished my parents would build a shelter, too, so that when the siren wailed, we could scurry into our bunker, safe from the blast and the rain of radioactive fallout that would make our hair fall out and our skin glow in the dark. Our family of five would live cozily, like rabbits in a storybook, popping up now and then to see if Earth was safe, the nuclear winter over. But my parents never built a shelter (nor did any family in our neighborhood). The adults seemed unconcerned about the impending war and never told us kids what to do in case of an atomic blast. So I made my own survival kit – an old mayonnaise jar filled with string, rubber bands, matches, chopsticks (kindling to start a fire), and a pocket knife. I hid this kit in the bird-of-paradise bush near the porch, and planned to get it after the blast and survive on my own. I

showed the kit to my cousin, who lived in Pauoa, and he made one for himself.

On Kea'ahala Road, where we lived until I was eleven, ethnic differences among the boys never led to anyone being excluded, as we all shared a common quest to have fun. But from an early age, we also began to learn ethnic labels and stereotypes. As we got older, ethnic ragging and name-calling became more frequent, often in fun, sometimes not. Our prejudices began popping out of the bucket of our brains like slippery eels.

Ethnic hostilities, prejudices, and stereotypes had developed during the colonial and plantation eras in Hawai'i, when groups with different backgrounds and conflicting socioeconomic interests began interacting in the villages, fields, camps, mills, and towns. The haoles arrived from Europe with prejudices about the inferiority of people with darker skin and about the uncivilized simplicity of pre-capitalist ways of living.

From the beginning of plantation life, haole bosses complained that the native Hawaiian workers were lazy. In 1836, the manager of the first sugar plantation in the islands, at Kōloa on Kaua'i, wrote in a letter to the owners that the workers were "on their oars [asses] in my absence," "do but little when my back is turned," and "display so little interest for their employment that it makes my heart ache" (Takaki). The stereotype of the lazy native worker is found wherever colonialists tried to employ natives. Always exploited, often enslaved, the natives had little motivation to work hard in order to enrich someone else. "Laziness" was a form of rebellion. In the early years of colonialism, when natives were not yet dependent on the capitalist economy for their survival and well-being, they could return to their families and communities and live off the land and sea. But as generations passed, this option became increasingly less viable as hunting, fishing and gathering territory diminished, families and communities broke down, and traditional knowledge was lost as children were sent – in some colonies, forced to go – to colonial schools and assimilated into capitalist culture.

According to another observer on the Kōloa plantation, the workers were not sitting on their asses when the manager was absent; they were entertaining themselves with "vulgar humor" and mimicking the haole manager. During these mimicking sessions, perhaps the stereotype of the dumb haole was born. In the eyes of kānaka maoli (and later Asian workers), the haoles were not in charge because of their superior intelligence, but because of their race or family connections; and handicapped by an unfamiliarity with local geography and native ways of getting things done, the haoles didn't appear to know much.

Unhappy with native workers, the Kōloa manager hired some Chinese to work in the mill. (The first Chinese had arrived in Hawai'i in the early 1800s as crew and cooks on ships engaged in exporting Hawaiian sandalwood to China.) The manager deemed the Chinese more reliable and trustworthy than the Hawaiians. But both kānaka maoli and pa-ke (locals of Chinese ancestry,

from the Cantonese "bak-ah," or uncle) began using counterfeit scripts to buy goods at the plantation store.

Despite haole complaints about the workers' lack of productivity and fraud, the plantations and stores were highly profitable. The number of plantations increased, resulting in labor shortages. At the same time, the indigenous population was diminishing due to haole diseases and poor health care, so in 1852, the owners brought in contract workers as cheap labor from China. By the early 1880s the Chinese workers outnumbered the natives by two to one. But plantation work was grueling and low-paying, so after their five-year contracts were up, many of the Chinese either returned to China or settled in towns to find jobs or start businesses.

Those Chinese who saved their money and started businesses were stereotyped as stingy by other ethnic groups like the Hawaiians, who were more inclined to share what they had with others. The Chinese surname "Chang" became synonymous with "stingy." As kids, we singsonged this derisive rhyme about the pa-ke:

> Ching-chong Chinaman sitting on a fence,
> Trying to make a dollar out of fifteen cents.

Such was the dream of capitalists of every ethnicity – to start with fifteen cents in the morning and end up with a dollar at night, often at someone else's expense.

As the Chinese increased in numbers on the plantations and in the towns (by 1880, one-fourth of the population was Chinese), the haoles began to fear the Chinese might gain an advantage over them in a labor dispute; it would be easier to control an ethnically and linguistically diverse work force because the groups couldn't communicate with each other and unite against the owners. This strategy of divide and control had been developed by early global capitalists in the eighteenth century: British and American slave traders and plantation owners mixed groups from different African tribes on slave ships and plantations so that there would be "no more Likelihood of [the slaves] succeeding in a Plot, than of [their] finishing the Tower of Babel" (Hitchens).

Thus, while the plantation owners in Hawai'i needed more workers to expand their operations, they didn't want more Chinese. They decided to recruit labor from Portugal and Japan. In 1886, laborers from China were banned by the Hawaiian Kingdom (following a U.S. ban in 1882). By then, thousands of Portuguese and Japanese had been signed up and brought to work in Hawai'i. Later, to diversify the work force further, the owners recruited workers from Puerto Rico, Norway, Korea, the Philippines, and America.

The Portuguese workers were given preferential treatment and promoted to overseers on the plantations not because they were better qualified or educated than other workers, but because while they didn't speak English and weren't Anglo-Saxon or Protestant, they were Europeans. Like haoles, they sometimes

seemed incompetent in positions for which they weren't qualified and were viewed as dumb by the other workers. Today Potagees, their descendants, continue to be stereotyped as dumb in numerous inane ethnic jokes.

In 1920, when Japanese workers joined Filipino workers in a strike for higher wages and better working conditions, the newspapers of the haole plantation owners vilified the Japanese as deceitful, arrogant, clannish, and disloyal. As in 1909, when the Japanese went on strike demanding the same pay and housing that the Portuguese and Puerto Ricans got, the owners were able to break the strike with workers from the other ethnic groups. It would be another quarter of a century – in 1946 – before a multiethnic workers union gained the upper hand on owners and won better working conditions from a strike. The workers' lingua franca was pidgin English. Ironically, this language that owners and supervisors developed to communicate with a multiethnic work force also became the language that the workers used to overcome their ethnic and linguistic divisions and unite against the owners.

By the 1920s, the Japanese were too numerous for haole comfort – more than forty percent of the population. Many of the workers had sent for picture brides and started families, so their numbers increased not only from immigration, but from births. In 1924, under pressure from American racists supported by haole businessmen in Hawai'i, the U.S. Congress banned Japanese laborers from entering America and its territories. The haoles characterized the Japanese, like the previously banned Chinese, as un-assimilable and dangerous – a threat to white dominance in Hawai'i and on the West Coast.

The last major group of contract workers brought to Hawai'i were from the Philippines. Between 1910 and 1932 more than 100,000 Filipinos arrived. Like earlier contract workers, they were mostly males who came to earn higher wages than they could in their homeland.

Like the male Chinese and Japanese workers who arrived before them, the Filipinos came to be associated with prostitution on the plantations. In Milton Murayama's *All I Asking For Is My Body*, a Japanese husband and wife set up a house of prostitution in the Filipino camp, with the husband serving as pimp and the wife as prostitute. The enterprising couple are the only workers on the plantation who can afford to own a Model T.

Jepanis and other locals with families began to stereotype the manong as a dangerous sex maniac, a threat to their wives and daughters. ("Manong," used to refer to immigrants and locals of Filipino ancestry, was originally an Ilocano term of respect for an older brother or male; like many ethnic labels, it could be neutral or derogatory, depending on the tone.) The ethnic fantasy of the dangerous manong is vividly expressed in Lois-Ann Yamanaka's poem "Kala Gave Me Anykine Advice Especially About Filipinos When I Moved to Pahala" (*Saturday Night at the Pahala Theater*). Kala advises her young female friend not to whistle at night because it would attract an old manong with yellow teeth who hides behind the marungay tree; the manong would kidnap her, cut off her bi-lot with his cane knife, and fry the sexual organ in

Crisco Oil. (Talk about eating pussy!)

The Jepani fear of manongs parallels the white fear of blacks. Many Jepanis, like many haoles, see people with darker skin as dangerous.

By the 1970s the manong population in Hawai‘i included families with children. “Flip,” short for Filipino, began to replace “manong.” The newer term had, at least to me, a more disrespectful connotation than the older one. The cane-knife-wielding-sexually-depraved stereotype was joined by another one of the knife- or gun-wielding Flip youth gang member. And the sex maniac stereotype morphed into new forms in Yamanaka’s fertile imagination. In *Blu’s Hanging*, the four daughters of the Reyes family (of vaguely mixed ancestry, but with a suggestion of Filipino blood in their name) are dubbed the “Human Rats.” Ivah, the Jepani heroine, suspects that the sisters are torturing and killing her cats; and at least two of the sisters are performing fellatio on the neighborhood boys, including the heroine’s fat brother, Blu. At the climax of the novel, the girls’ twenty-year-old Uncle Paulo, who sexually molests his nieces at the swimming pool, rapes Blu. (By contrast, the Jepani heroine is saved by a Jepani school teacher, who helps her escape poverty and desperation on Moloka‘i and gets her into a private school in Honolulu.)

More recently, based on a single incident reported in the media, rumors spread in the Jepani community that Filipina care-home operators were abusing elderly Jepanis, rumors partly fueled by the guilt of families no longer willing or able to care for their elderly. (In some cases, too busy taking care of themselves.) Three care-home operators wrote a letter to the newspaper condemning the stereotyping and pointing out that their elderly Jepani clients were receiving good care.

While I was growing up, I got the impression my father didn’t like haoles. When I asked my mother why this was, she said that haoles of their generation stuck together didn’t mix socially with non-white locals because haoles generally had an attitude that they were better than others.

My father’s mother was as ethnocentric as any haole and advised her grandchildren, whenever we visited her on Maui, to “marry Jepani.”

During World War II and after, discrimination against Jepanis also contributed to my father’s dislike of haoles. He told us that personnel at haole-owned Hawaiian Airlines would allow people of other ancestries to board flights before Jepanis. He refused to fly on Hawaiian for the rest of his life.

After graduating from Maui High School in 1944, he was drafted into the army while in his first year at the University of Hawai‘i. The war ended before he finished basic training at Fort McClellan, Alabama. Perhaps he witnessed the discrimination against blacks that was openly practiced by whites in the South at that time. After training, he was sent with the occupation forces to Japan. When he got out, he married my mother and went to Milwaukee to get

a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering. When he returned to Hawai‘i, he couldn’t find a job in an economy dominated by haoles, so he ended up taking a job with the U.S. Navy on Guam.

Employment opportunities began to increase in Hawai‘i during the post-war economic boom fueled by growing military spending, a profitable agricultural industry, and a developing tourism industry, so my parents returned home after a couple of years. My father was hired as a radio technician by RCA, a national telecommunications company, which was apparently more willing to hire non-haoles than were the haole-run local businesses. Another big employer of Jepanis was the state government. My mother got a job as a dietitian at the state hospital on Kea‘ahala Road and we moved into a house down the street.

In the 1960s, my father brought an RCA coworker from Germany and his wife to a family dinner. But when the workers went on strike against the company, the haole became a scab. Another rap on haoles: they look after themselves first and only. We never saw the guy again. Shortly after the strike, my father quit his job at RCA and got a job teaching electronics at Roosevelt High School.

My father’s prejudice toward haoles was shared by many locals. The plantation-era stereotype of the dumb haole persisted as a put-down. One of my high school buddies (half-haole himself) joked in English class during a discussion of redundancy: “Isn’t ‘dumb haole’ an example of a redundancy?” Often the insult was heard when a haole failed to observe some common local custom, like when a haole would walk into a house with his shoes on, tracking mud, instead of taking his shoes off at the door like everyone else; or when a haole would show up empty-handed at a party to eat and drink, thinking that local people had so much aloha, they always fed haoles for free. Such faux pas were often excused with a snicker and a condescending, “Oh, he just one dumb haole.”

Of all the non-white ethnic groups, the deepest resentment against the haole was found among kānaka maoli; this resentment was rooted in anger over the loss of sovereignty over their homeland. At first the haoles served the Hawaiian monarchy as advisors and persuaded the King to allow foreigners to lease, then buy and own land to encourage investment in plantations, as well as to allow immigration from “cognate races” in Asia to replenish the diminishing native labor force. Over time, the haoles used their access to and control of capital, labor, technology, shipping, and markets to take over the economy and gain possession of the majority of the best agricultural and residential lands.

When the haoles felt threatened by Queen Lili‘uokalani’s efforts to take back some of political power the indigenous rulers had lost, the haoles overthrew the monarchy with the support of the U.S. Marines. After five years of a haole-run republic (1893-1898), the colonials convinced the U.S. Congress to annex Hawai‘i to America, thus gaining military backing against

threats to their political control and a price advantage for the sugar they produced; America, in turn, got a Pacific outpost from which to defend its west coast and to expand economically into Asia.

There were relatively few haole students at the public schools I attended. Haole families seemed to have less kids than families of Asian and Polynesian ancestries, and most of the haole kids were either in the public schools around the military bases or in private schools.

Most of the kānaka maoli kids who did well in school disappeared from public schools during or just after elementary school. I found out later that many of them went to Kamehameha Schools, a private school for Hawaiians supported by an endowment of the ali‘i Pauahi Bishop, heir to the lands and wealth of the Kamehameha family. Other kānaka maoli kids from middle- and upper-class families had enrolled with the children of haoles and wealthy local Asians in other private schools.

Since missionary times, the children of upper-class haoles and Hawaiian royalty went to exclusive schools. Later, in the 1920s, the so-called English standard public schools were established to separate students who spoke “standard English” (haoles and educated Hawaiians) from those who didn’t, mainly the children of immigrants. According to a U.S. Bureau of Education report, “many white people, Hawaiians, and Part-Hawaiians” would benefit from these segregated schools because their children “would not be outnumbered in their classes by the Orientals, who have little in common with them and whose language difficulties impede the progress of all” (qtd. in Kanae). These segregated public schools were eventually deemed unequal and un-American and were abolished after World War II.

By the time I entered Castle Intermediate and High in 1964, the plantation stereotype of the arrogant, deceitful Japanese had merged with the Jap of World War II: we were identified with the devious, buck-toothed, slant-eyed, rice-eating enemy who had blasted Pearl Harbor twenty-three years earlier. Although many Jepanis had volunteered to fight for and many had died for America in the war that followed, many locals still had trouble distinguishing the Jepanis from the Japanese. An annual event at Castle a week or so before December 7 was “Kill Jap Day” or “Pearl Harbor Day.” Occasionally it was more than talk, and some Jepani kid got beaten up, purportedly as pay-back for Pearl Harbor, but usually for some more recent offense, like talking stink, checking out someone else’s girl or guy, or even looking at someone for too long.

The resentment toward Jepanis in public schools was rooted as much in class as ethnicity. The children of the nisei middle-class seemed privileged relative to students from lower income families. The middle-class kids came to school with new clothes and new school supplies every September. The

Jepanis also caused some resentment because of a tendency to stick together, which was due partly to their common upbringing and values, including a feeling of shame about intruding on other people's space or lives; partly to middle-class snobbishness; and partly to ethnocentrism and prejudice toward or fear of kids of other ancestries.

The Jepani kids were favored by some of the predominantly Jepani and haole teachers who seemed to feel more comfortable with the quiet, obedient college-bound students than with the more rambunctious, less studious kids. The students in the college-prep classes were mainly Jepanis or of other Asian ancestries and haoles. This created the impression and led some teachers to believe that the other local kids were inherently less smart. One kanaka maoli student told me that her Oriental teacher put all the Hawaiian and Polynesian kids in the slow group on the first day of class, without bothering to test anyone.

The Jepani kids were occasionally hijacked or beaten up by Hawaiian schoolmates, who were stereotyped as mokes (big, fearsome, not-too-bright males prone to violence and crime) and titas, or female mokes. The stereotypes are dramatized in Yamanaka's melodramatic novel *Heads by Harry*. Tita Lynette Vasconcellos, who isn't doing well in school, suspects that pretty Bunny Yagyuu (a sad wannabe-haole) has seduced the guy she likes. Lynette confronts Bunny and calls her a "little Japanee slut," threatens to kick her ass, and eventually catches her after school and pounds her face repeatedly into a fence. Later the Yagyuus hire two pig-hunting, haole-hating "mokes with dark glasses," Wyatt and Maverick Santos, whose intimidating looks and threatening behavior qualify them to collect unpaid bills for the Yagyuu family business. Of course, like Lynette, the brothers aren't excelling in school; Wyatt can't read the subtitles when he goes to samurai movies with Bunny's older sister. While Yamanaka's tita and mokes have Portuguese last names, the local reader imagines them to be hapa, or mixed, and part-Hawaiian.

My brother recalled recently that he was punched out in high school by some Hawaiian boys. One day, coming out of a rest room at school, he bumped shoulders with a small Potagee. Small guy: "Fuckin' Jap, watch where you going." My brother: "Fuck you, you bumped me." Too chicken to settle the dispute up-and-up right there, the guy decided to call on his boys, a not uncommon practice among all the ethnic groups except the haoles, who weren't numerous enough to have many backers. The boys cornered my brother in the showers at Ala Moana Park one Sunday and told him to call his boys (us Jepanis and manongs who surfed with him), so they could kick our asses all at once. My brother declined and took the beating himself.

I might have thought what my brother had said, but not have said it, depending on my assessment of whether I thought the guy could kick my ass or if he had friends that could. This incident (among others) confirmed the belief I shared with Falstaff that, "The better part of valor is discretion."

The year before I entered Castle, my mother asked me if I wanted to take a test to get into ʻIolani, a private school. She and my father were willing to scrimp and save up the tuition. I told her no thanks. My brother was two years ahead of me at Castle, and I knew all of his friends, plus my own friends from the neighborhood and from Ben Parker Elementary and Kapunahala School. I felt safe at school and didn't want to leave my buddies. Unconcerned about the quality of education or getting into the best colleges, the guys saw private schools as being for rich kids and sissies who couldn't handle the rougher, wilder public schools. (Partly to counteract this sissy image, private schools gave scholarships to top athletes; not surprisingly, as scholarship-giving increased, the larger, richer private schools began to win the majority of state championships.)

I was in the college-prep classes with other middle-class Jepani kids, but didn't hang out with them. From small kid time, I was used to climbing over walls and fences, stepping across boundaries and limits, testing things just to see what would happen. In ninth-grade science lab when the teacher was out, I pushed a pair of tweezers into an electrical outlet to see if they would heat up like an iron. Instead there was a small explosion and all the outlets at my table went out. The tips of the tweezers were melted. Luckily I knew enough about electricity to use a glass slide, not my fingers, to push the tweezers in.

Outside of class I hung out with our surf club, which we formed in the ninth grade. We used the boys' rest rooms as smoking lounges during recess and lunch. Like surfing, smoking was a bonding activity for male adolescents. If you had cigarettes, you had to share them with everyone. You could end up giving away your whole pack in one recess if you were dumb enough to pull it out. One trick was to put a couple of cigarettes in your shirt pocket to give out and keep the rest of your pack in your pants pocket. When you lit up, you had to take some hits quickly before someone bummed your cigarette and passed it on. Each guy in the chain sucked hard on it, so that by the time it came back, it was red hot and wet with tobacco juice and saliva, and you didn't feel like smoking it anymore. Chucky was the worst – he could inhale half the cigarette in one long drag, with smoke streaming out from his nostrils like steam from a kettle. After that, the cigarette looked, felt, smelled, and tasted nasty, its clean white cylindrical form shrivelled into a burning twig.

Smoke got so thick inside the rest rooms, it billowed out the doors and windows, but the teachers and administrators didn't bother us since we were harming only ourselves.

The complaint about the public school rest rooms back then was that they weren't clean and well maintained. The boys' toilets were filled with butts and the stalls smelled of piss and lacked doors and toilet paper. Those who didn't know anyone in the smoking crowd avoided the toilets during recess and went during class time when the rest rooms were empty. The girls' rest rooms were not as unclean as the boys', but I heard they were pretty bad. The prissy ones

had to become teachers' pets or student aides to acquire the privilege of using the women faculty's rest rooms, which were kept locked and clean.

Complaints about the rest rooms continue today. A recent headline quoted a report labeling the condition of some as "pathetic" because stall doors lacked locks, toilets and sinks needed repair, tiles were cracked, and the air smelled foul; and in some, there was no toilet paper, soap, or paper towels. This last complaint reminded me of one of Chucky's favorite jokes. Haole dinner host to a local guy just back from the bathroom: "Did you wash your hands?" Local guy: "What for? I nevah piss on my hands."

If your family didn't have money for private school tuition, you most likely went to a public school. Home-schooling wasn't a movement back then, and anyway, in many families, both parents worked. You had to learn to deal with the relatively poorly maintained rest rooms and the occasional rowdiness.

Our gang saw fights as entertainment, like watching boxing or wrestling on TV. When the rumors of an upcoming beef spread around campus, we showed up at the designated site to watch. The fights were mostly two guys jumping around, with occasional wild flailing. The combatants rarely did much damage because most of the kids had little or no training or skill in fighting. (No one I knew carried a gun or knife back then; that was considered chicken-shit.)

One guy who seemed to have some training as a boxer was Lui, a lanky, muscular, six-foot-tall Tongan. Lui was a friend of my manong-Jepani buddy from Kea'ahala Road and came surfing with us a couple of times at Ala Moana Park. I thought Lui was a couple of grades behind in school because he looked older than we did and treated us like younger brothers. While we hung out at the beach wall, he complimented all of us on our surfing styles, comparing each to a well-known surfing star like George Downing or David Nu'uhiwa. He stood up on the wall and imitated our stances. That day we walked with our chests a little puffed out, like young cocks strutting around a yard.

One day Lui fought with a big senior after school. I don't know what the fight was over, but Lui never got hit and his quick jab kept landing with a ka-toosh in the other guy's face – the sound of a fist smashing cartilage. After a few minutes, the other guy put his hands down and gave up. Blood from his broken nose spotted his white shirt. While I'm generally against violence as a means of settling disputes, at least Lui fought up-and-up and cleanly and didn't keep punching after the guy put his hands down. And Lui's physical grace and power were awesome; the way the rest of the guys fought was embarrassing by contrast. Lui reminded me of Cassius Clay, who had won the heavyweight boxing championship from Sonny Liston a couple of years earlier.

Lui was the first guy I smoked marijuana with; he and some guys were over at my house one night when my parents were away in Japan, where my father had been sent by RCA on a temporary assignment. Lui asked if he could drive my father's Volkswagen Bug so we could pick up some weed at a friend's

house. I got a little nervous and wanted to tell him no, but that would make me look like a panty, so I got the keys and we went. I was worried the whole way that he was going to crash the car, and I would have to make up a story for my parents. But Lui knew how to drive. When we got back, we smoked the weed, then walked to a dance at the school gym.

Lui disappeared from school after our sophomore year. Later, I heard that his family had sent him back to Tonga and when he returned to Hawai‘i, he told friends evil spirits were chasing him. I heard that he jumped to his death off the cliff at the Nu‘uanu Pali while on an acid trip. The story seemed unreal to me; I never found out if it was true.

One night during our sophomore year, some of the guys wanted to go to Kailua to beat up haoles. Kailua was Kāne‘ohe’s rival town; there was a large haole population in Kailua, with soldiers and their families from the marine base at Mōkapu and well-off haole families living along the beach. Ironically, while the haole media had instilled in us an us-against-them attitude to turn us into good soldiers to kill commies, our tribe saw haoles as the enemy.

Like “Kill Jap Day,” “Kill Haole Night” was usually just talk. Most weekend nights, we just cruised around drinking beer and smoking weed, talking big and razzing each other. Then we would end up shooting pool and later stopping at Windy’s Drive-In for cheeseburgers, french fries, and Cokes to sober up before going home.

That night we had two cars, four or five guys of Japanese, Hawaiian, and mixed ancestry in each, which was not unlike the “carload of local boys” who were falsely accused of raping Thalia Massie in 1931. (I read about this case in college, and it helped me understand the roots of hostility between haoles and locals that was so apparent in high school. The Massie case inflamed racial tensions in Hawai‘i. After a mistrial was declared and the five local boys were freed, some haole sailors kidnapped one of the Jepanis and beat him unconscious; then Massie’s husband, a navy lieutenant, and two buddies kidnapped and tried to beat a confession out of one of the other boys, Joe Kahahawai. When their victim refused to confess, Massie shot and killed him. Massie was convicted only of manslaughter after claiming “temporary insanity.” The haole governor commuted Massie’s prison sentence of ten years to one hour, and Massie was free to leave the islands.)

On the night that some of the boys wanted to beat up haoles, we went to Nanko’s Fishing Supplies to get some beer. (In Hawai‘i, as elsewhere, beer is considered a fishing supply.) I was the designated buyer who waited outside the store to ask an adult customer to buy us a case or two whenever we wanted to drink, which was every weekend. I usually chose to ask a local guy who looked like a construction worker and avoided asking middle-class haoles or Jepanis. (One night when there were no customers for fifteen minutes, I got impatient and decided to ask the first guy who came by – a bespectacled Jepani

who looked like an accountant. When I asked him if he would buy us a couple of cases, he backed away from me as if I had a disease. "Are you nuts?" he said, wide-eyed. But everyone else I ever asked was willing to buy us a case or two.)

After buying a case for each car, we drove around Kāneʻohe drinking, then headed for Kailua, parked, and went walking up the beach to look for haoles. We came upon a group of them playing guitars and singing folk songs around a campfire. One of them sensed danger and tried to get friendly, inviting us to join them.

Some of our guys were a lot more hostile than the rest of us, who were just along for the ride. Their hostility seemed to be rooted not just in prejudices, but in the frustrations of lower-middle-class family life.

One of the hostiles was Alan, a Jepani. He told us once that his older brother had beaten up their father. I was a little shocked; I had never heard of such a thing. But I guess if someone hits you all the time, you should hit him back, even if he is your father. Another hostile was Chucky, who was of Hawaiian-Chinese ancestry. His foster father was a haole taxi-driver in Waikīkī. I met Chucky in homeroom, because both our last names started with "K." He came to Castle in the ninth grade from Kalākaua, in Kalihi. We talked about surfing, and he had a board, so I invited him to surf with us at Ala Moana.

Then there was John, another Jepani. His family used to live in the house next door to us on Keaʻahala Road. His father was usually away, working on Kwajalein Atoll for the military, so his mother raised the three boys and their older sister mostly on her own. I had the impression that his parents didn't get along. John and his two brothers played war games with us. He and I were hot-tempered and hated to lose, so at times we would face off under the mango tree between our houses, huffing and accusing each other of cheating, arms cocked, occasionally throwing flurries of ineffectual blows. The next day we would be buddies again. (I gave up fighting after I got my ass kicked in intermediate school by one of my best friends, a skinny Jepani with fast hands. The only blow I got in was a false crack to the back of his head as he walked away after pounding me to the ground. That false crack resulted in my getting hit some more. Only my pride was hurt; his blows bounced off my thick skull as painlessly as raindrops.)

I was somewhat skeptical that the guys were going to do anything because I had heard their talk about beating up haoles before, without any action; but to my surprise, Alan, Chucky, and John started flailing on three haoles, who covered up and backed away. A guy and a girl scurried behind a naupaka hedge toward a big white house with picture windows, probably to call the cops.

The rest of us knew what the hostiles were doing was wrong; we told them, "Le's go, Le's go – befo' dey call da cops." We all started walking back to the cars. (By the time we were seniors, the three hostiles had haole girl friends. Some local guys wanted haole girl friends because the American media glamorized white skin, blonde hair, and big breasts.)

A little drunk, we got separated into groups as we walked back. I was with Lance, another Jepani, walking behind the others. We came up to a couple of skinny local Asian kids, one of them doubled-over on the sand, holding his stomach and whimpering. Lance asked them what happened. The guy on the ground told him, "Some guys wen' hijack us. One wen' punch me in da stomach. Sore … I get ulcers." Lance, the shortest of our gang but stocky and fearless, got pissed. He walked up the beach faster to catch up with the other guys.

When he caught up with them, he started yelling, "Who da fuck wen' punch da guy on the beach?"

"Why?" John sneered.

"Was you? Was you?" Lance said in his face.

"Why?"

"'Cuz da fuckah had ulcers."

"Fuck, like I knew he had ulcers," John snapped. "Plus, da fuckah wen' lie. He said he nevah have money." John had stuck his hand in the guy's pocket and found a couple of bills, which he took.

Lance, who wasn't much into talking, threw a punch at John's head. They started to scuffle, so we pulled them apart. "Cool head, cool head." John and Lance went to different cars, and we drove to the other end of Kailua, near Lanikai, to a parking lot where a couple of big local guys were drinking beers. They told us a cop had come by and questioned them about kids walking around on the beach beating up others kids. We decided to split up and head back to Kāneʻohe by different routes.

A few years later, when I was in college, I heard that John had to leave Hawaiʻi because some guys thought he was an informant for the narcs and were out to get him. He went to Las Vegas, where he became a card dealer until someone supposedly slit his wrists for cheating. I never found out if this story was true.

Over three decades later, a friend ran into Alan at Ala Moana Park, where he had been assigned by a judge to perform community service; for what offense, Alan wouldn't say. He had married his haole girlfriend from high school, had a son, and was employed at a hotel. Around the same time, I ran into Lance at the college where I was teaching; he was a construction inspector for the state.

The rowdiness of my high school friends was due, in part, to a failure of the colonial education system to instill a sense of community that included everyone. Ideally, our schools should celebrate the physical, social, and spiritual values of everyone in our diverse multiethnic community and introduce students to ancestral and local role models for productive behavior and achievement. Schools should help students develop self-respect, which is fundamental to developing a capacity to respect others. They should help

students understand and overcome the prejudices that imprison us. But while the American vision of "liberty and justice for all" was inclusive, the school curriculum, like the media, privileged the haole. Almost everything we read in school was about haoles, written by haoles, for haoles, from a haole point of view. Haoles were the heroes of seemingly every story; non-haoles were generally the enemies, the criminals, the losers, or the sidekicks.

The predominantly Jepani and haole teachers were trained to impose on us haole ways of talking, viewing the world, and behaving, as if we were supposed to aspire to be haole-like. This imposition created resentment, and some of the students naturally rebelled. In Alani 'Apio's play *Kāmau*, three kānaka maoli students are at odds with a Jepani schoolteacher who lectures them about the value of education, without being aware of the conflict they feel between a colonial education and native values and traditions. One of the boys shouts: "Fuck you, Jap!" "Fuckin' Jap" was a commonly heard phrase used to refer to a culturally ignorant and insensitive Jepani, like a teacher believes that anyone who isn't doing well in school is either lazy or dumb.

The turn-everyone-into-Anglos strategy in the public schools was developed by nineteenth-century mainland educators who wanted to Americanize indigenous peoples and a rapidly growing non-Anglo, non-Protestant European immigrant labor force (Italians, Irish, Poles, and Jews). Non-Anglo languages and cultures were supposedly un-American, inferior, and dangerous, and had to be suppressed by teaching everyone standard English and Anglo-American history and traditions. A veneer of ethnic diversity was allowed in staged performances featuring exotic costumes, music, dances, and cultural activities (such events are still popular today), but below the surface, everyone was supposed to be alike, sharing the same capitalist, democratic, patriotic, Anglo values.

The first Western schools in Hawai'i were established in the nineteenth century by New England missionaries to Christianize, "civilize," and "enlighten" the kānaka maoli. The plantation owners saw no need to educate the children of the immigrant workers, because most of the plantation jobs required only manual labor.

After Hawai'i was annexed to the U.S., the territorial government was obligated to provide public education for everyone. The mission of the territorial schools was to assimilate the children of immigrants, natives, and locals. The world wars stoked patriotic fervor and calls for Americanization and for non-Anglos to prove their loyalty by learning to speak English properly and fighting and dying for America.

The push to Americanize Hawai'i intensified after World War II and culminated in statehood in 1959, when I was in the second grade at Ben Parker. Statehood was supported by the majority of natives and locals because they believed that as part of America they would get wealthier, and in a democracy, they could wrest political control of the state from haole businessmen and bankers who had controlled life in Hawai'i since the overthrow of the

monarchy. The election victories of native and local politicians after the war were a sign of political change.

The news that Congress had voted to make Hawai‘i a state was announced over the P.A. at Ben Parker one morning in March. I wasn't sure what all the excitement was about. The difference between territory and state wasn't clear to me; and we were already Americans. We recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag every morning; on statehood morning we donned the three-cornered hats made by folding pages of the *Honolulu Advertiser* and, led by our part-Hawaiian teacher, paraded up Kamehameha Highway to Kea‘ahala Road and back, with small American flags in hand. A few passing cars tooted their horns, and the drivers waved to us.

The nineteenth-century American assimilationist policy was still in effect when I entered Castle High School in 1964. Literature was the study of American and British literature, along with a couple of European texts in translation. We read Homer, Beowulf, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Hugo, D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, and so on. We learned biology from reading a textbook about the temperate ecology and flora and fauna of North America, never once going outside to study local geography, the fish and coral of Kāne‘ohe Bay, or the extraordinary and unique evolutionary and biological heritage of the islands.

World history in tenth grade focused on Europe: ancient Greece and Rome and Western Europe. We spent a couple of weeks building a miniature scale model of Venice while studying the Renaissance.

American history in eleventh grade told the story of settlers of European ancestry moving across the continent from east to west under the banner of progress – killing native Americans to make the conquered and stolen land safe for white settlement and the development of capitalism. We learned how the buffalo hunters, farmers, cattle ranchers, miners, and railroaders took over the West, backed by the U.S. cavalry. (The same story was dramatized in television programs and movies.)

Our eleventh grade American history teacher was an anti-Communist Christian of Finnish ancestry, whose hero was J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the FBI. This teacher recommended we read Hoover's *Masters of Deceit*, which I dutifully did. That year, I wrote a research paper on the Transcontinental Railroad. None of my library sources mentioned anything about the Chinese laborers who had built large portions of this capitalist project, and then were chased out of towns in the West or sent back to China. The Chinese were excluded from the photographs taken to celebrate the completion of the railroad. I doubt if my American history teacher knew anything about the Chinese workers or their fate.

Years later, after I had graduated, I heard that this teacher was arrested as a peeping Tom. Like Hoover and God, perhaps he felt a need to peer into our

bedrooms and bathrooms to determine if anyone was engaging in un-American or un-Christian activity.

We learned little about kānaka maoli traditions in high school. An elective called "Hawaiiana" was offered – simplified crafts and modern adaptations of arts. It was not for college-bound students, not a serious study of the traditional culture. Back then Hawaiiana was required by the public schools only in the fourth grade. It was taught mainly as arts and crafts for children in elementary school, while Western culture was supposedly more intellectually challenging for study in high school and college.

My fourth grade teacher was a sweet white-haired lady of Swedish ancestry from the Midwest, who lived in a beach house made of coral in Kaʻaʻawa. On display in her classroom was her collection of shells and sea creatures pickled in formaldehyde. I was fascinated by the moray eel, the octopus, and the balloon fish. But she knew nothing, and taught us nothing, about Hawaiian history or culture. The only Hawaiian culture we learned that year was a hula ʻiliʻili to "Kalena Kai," taught to the fourth graders by a kumu from the community. We performed the hula on May Day. The fifth graders did the traditional maypole dance, as they did every year; the sixth graders chose to do a new rock-'n'-roll dance called "The Continental," which they had learned from watching *American Bandstan*d.

What little I read about native traditions during my public school years was full of distortions aimed at demeaning the kanaka maoli and their culture. J.D. Holt, in his *Recollections*, describes the general intent of nineteenth century Christian accounts of Hawaiian culture which were at the base of what we learned about it:

> The old culture was ruthlessly attacked by the missionaries Bingham, Dibble, and Stewart, and by their champions, Cheever, Jarves, and Bates; all these men had very little good to say about the ancient Hawaiian way of life. It was 'pagan,' it was 'backward,' it was, alas, non-Christian and therefore 'evil.' The Hawaiian people were brain-washed into turning away from their native culture and values to a degree unthinkable even in our day and age.

In "From a Native Daughter," Haunani K. Trask notes that settlers negatively stereotyped Hawaiians as "lazy," "promiscuous," "superstitious," and "primitive" and claimed that the traditional way of life was feudal and that the chiefs were despotic. Actually, despotic chiefs were ridiculed, deposed, and exiled or killed; chiefs who took care of the land and people were honored and revered. Western scholars presented the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy as an inevitable and desirable progression of society from feudalism to democracy, as if Hawaiian history was a replay of European history. In this mythic presentation, the haole and their supporters are cast in the role of heroic, democratic revolutionaries. The actual story was much more complex

and tragic.

English was the language of monocultural Americanism that dominated education. Hawaiian language wasn't offered at Castle in the 1960s, an omission that wasn't seen as egregious by those in charge; nor was it publicly protested in the community, even though students of Hawaiian ancestry made up a big part of the student body. The assumption was that to participate in society and the local and global economy, we had to learn English; Hawaiian wasn't spoken by enough people to create a market that could compete with the English-speaking economy. The native language and culture would be revitalized in the school system only after the tourism industry recognized the profit-making value of Hawaiian culture in promoting the islands and attracting more visitors.

When I entered Castle High School, the languages other than English offered were Latin and French. I took two years of French. Our teacher was a nisei veteran who fought in France during World War II. In my junior year, Japanese was added to the language offerings. Ten years earlier, the National Defense Education Act targeted science and languages for educational funding to prepare America for global economic expansion and for spying on competitors and enemies. Meanwhile, the schools and universities who got the funding could claim they were promoting multicultural understanding for peace. The University of Hawai‘i developed a robust program in Asian languages and cultures, and the teaching of these languages and cultures began to filter down to the public schools. Japanese was selected for Castle and other schools no doubt because the Department of Education (DOE) was dominated by Jepani teachers and administrators, there were a lot of Jepani students, and the Japanese tourism market was growing. But by the time my ancestral language was offered in the curriculum at Castle, I had already fulfilled my language requirement for graduation with two years of French.

While what we learned in school was valuable to me and others planning to go to college (about twenty-five percent of the student body), none of our teachers was able to offer us much native or local knowledge. Western knowledge was so prevalent and dominant that even those teachers who might have had native or local knowledge didn't have the opportunity or the confidence to introduce it into the curriculum.

Looking back, it strikes me as odd to have been educated in a school system that taught so little about the place where we lived; it was as if we were being educated to live elsewhere or, even if we remained in Hawai‘i, to live in a virtual American reality, unconnected to place. And it continues to strike me as odd to meet so many people who have grown up here, yet who know so little about and have so little interest in the community in which they live, who spend so much time trying to imitate trends from elsewhere. Observing

the behavior of colonial residents in British Columbia, Jonathan Raban notes that colonials suffer from the "everlasting provincial anxiety that one's own experience, one's place and one's past are somehow less real than those of people nearer to the center of the big world."

Ideally, the school curriculum should integrate what we experience in our daily lives with progressively broader and more varied and abstract contexts and ideas that help us understand and explain it and guide us in our decisions and actions; the learner, like a young child climbing a mango tree, ascends to see ever farther and wider while living rooted.

In the decades after I graduated from high school, a local multiculturalism developed to promote the study of Hawai'i's native culture and language, as well as its multiethnic history and literature. The Ethnic Studies Department was established at the University of Hawai'i in 1970 to do research, develop curriculum, and train scholars and teachers in local history. The department has developed materials on and courses in the histories and traditions of Caucasians, Chinese, Filipinos, Hawaiians, Japanese, and Koreans in Hawai'i.

In 1978, the state constitution was revised to add Hawaiian as an official state language along with English and to direct the public schools to "promote the study of Hawaiian culture, history and language." Realizing that a typical public school teacher, even one educated in our schools and universities, had little or no knowledge of the native culture and language, the DOE started what became known as the Kūpuna Program in the 1980s to bring kānaka maoli elders into the classroom to teach. In 1984, the Hawaiian language immersion pre-schools, called Pūnana Leo ("Nest of Voices"), were established to educate a new generation of children in their native language, as the last generation of native speakers was disappearing – those who had grown up in the early twentieth century, when Hawaiian was still widely spoken and Hawaiian language newspapers were still being published.

In 1987, the Center for Hawaiian Studies was established at the University of Hawai'i to do research, train scholars and teachers, and disseminate knowledge about native culture and history. In the same year, Kula Kaiapuni ("Immersion Schools") were started, with the goal of developing K-12 Hawaiian language curriculum and schools on all the major islands. The first five students graduated from Kula Kaiapuni in 1999.

In 2000, the content guide adopted by the public schools required the study of native history and culture not just in the fourth grade, but at all levels: in grades 4-5, topics include Polynesian migrations, the settlement of Hawai'i, and the traditional culture; in 6-8, the Hawaiian monarchy; in 9-12, the modern history of Hawai'i, including its multiethnic plantation heritage and the renaissance of Hawaiian culture and sovereignty movements. The Pacific islands are included in social studies in grades 6-8, and world history in grades 9-12 includes Asia (though the outline in the guide still looks Eurocentric to

me).

Despite the effort to be more inclusive in the curriculum, some of the public school graduates in my first- and second-year college classes, educated thirty years after me, tell me they acquired very little native, local, or Asian-Pacific knowledge in their public school years.

While the topics in the curriculum guide may reflect more fully the world from which the majority of students come, teachers trained in an assimilationist, Eurocentric pedagogy still dominate the school system, so the university's efforts to promote multiculturalism seems to have had little impact on public school graduates. To fully implement a Hawai'i-based multicultural curriculum would require a new generation of teachers educated in and trained to teach such a curriculum.

In 1998, there was a murder in Wai'anae: a local teenager shot and killed an army helicopter pilot who was vacationing with his wife and two young sons at an army rest camp at Pōka'i Bay. Earlier that night, the teenager and his friends had been drinking and smoking weed. They went to the cabins intending to commit robbery. When they tried to open the locked door of one of the cabins, the pilot came out to confront them and chase them off. One of the boys fired a bullet into his chest.

The incident reminded me of that night in high school when our gang went roaming Kailua beach feeling hostile toward haoles. A number of factors seems to have made the Wai'anae situation more dangerous and tragic: the boys were not only drinking, but smoking pot, and they had a gun (both drugs and guns are more common today than in the past); and America's glorification of violence has grown more spectacular with technological advances in the media. Also, the feeling of frustration, anger, and powerlessness seems to have been stronger among the Wai'anae boys than in our gang. What was similar was the hostility toward haoles. While it was not mentioned in reports on the trial, the incident had implications of racial tension: the Wai'anae boys would have assumed that a robbery victim at the rest camp would be haole.

Hawai'i so far hasn't seen the kind of escalating ethnic violence that creates and feeds on deep reservoirs of hatred and cycles of murderous vengeance that have torn other communities apart – in the Mideast, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Congo, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, and so on. The combination of conditions that trigger widespread violence aren't broadly present in Hawai'i yet: not just poverty and disparities between rich and poor and among different ethnic groups, but also extremist religious or cultural beliefs, and a history of ethnic bloodshed. The historical events that might have led to civil conflict and bloodshed in Hawai'i didn't.

In the case of the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1894, Queen Lili'uokalani didn't issue a call to arms against her haole usurpers. She realized that Hawaiians would lose a war, but hoped that America would

right the wrong and return sovereignty to her and her people. As it turned out, America never did. In 1895, native Robert Wilcox led an armed revolt to restore the monarchy, but the outnumbered rebels surrendered after ten days. Five leaders were sentenced to death, but later pardoned.

During the plantation era, talking-stink, stink-eye, intimidation, and beatings occurred, but no widespread armed uprising. The worst incident of plantation violence took place in 1924, when sixteen striking Filipino workers and four police officers were killed during a riot on Kaua'i. The strike leaders were arrested, imprisoned, and deported, and the government and plantation owners restored order with their superior armed forces. The Massie case in the early 1930s was symptomatic of the race-based hostilities that had developed in Honolulu.

History matters; past injustices and violence, however sporadic, fester in the collective memory, and the stories and negative emotions are passed on through generations. Generally, only those who have gained the upper hand want to forgive and forget or ignore what happened in the past. In an essay about his identity, a kanaka maoli student of mine in one of my college English classes recently wrote that when he and his friends relax out in the surf, they talk about Hawaiian sovereignty and "how we are not American, how we are not in support of the military and America, and how we do not care too much for white people."

Given the history of Hawai'i, the movement for Hawaiian sovereignty is not surprising, and various kānaka maoli political organizations are working to establish a separate and independent indigenous nation, or a nation within a nation, on the model of Native American tribal governments. Other kānaka maoli groups, dissatisfied with the public school's curriculum and performance in educating their children, have formed independent charter schools to develop and implement culturally based curriculum and methods of teaching.

In my junior year, we formed a social club in order to meet girls. As we moved toward adulthood (college, careers, marriage, etc.), I felt the pull of ethnicity and class in socializing with others. There was a greater level of comfort among those who shared the same ethnicity, upbringing, aspirations, and prejudices. The guys in our club were middle-class, mainly Jepanis. We got invited by female clubs to parties at private homes or at community centers on weekends. Most of the girl clubs were middle-class, mainly Jepanis, and often had French-sounding names like Les Rocheres, Chantelles, or Orientelles.

For guys, it was a cheap and easy social life: the girls provided the food and music, usually records, sometimes live amateur bands; we just showed up to talk story, play getting-to-know-you games, eat, and dance with the girls, with close dancing to slow romantic songs toward midnight. We brought a supply of beer and pot in case the parties got boring, and we had to entertain ourselves outside in one of the cars. I no longer had to ask strangers to buy beer

for us because one of the guys worked for a supermarket and stole a couple of cases every weekend.

Meeting girls on weekends was more fun than cruising around looking for trouble, and safer. Luckily, I had been booked only once in high school – for a curfew violation when we were arrested by Vice Squad officers for hanging out at a pool hall in Kailua after ten at night. We had fun with the cops at the station, giving them our made-up "gangsta" nicknames when they asked us if we had aliases. When my mother picked us up after the booking, she wasn't too angry: shooting pool at 10:30 at night was no big thing, though it was against the law.

Our club traveled to parties as far away as ʻEwa Beach and Wahiawā, but mainly to Honolulu. Not surprisingly, my dates and girlfriends in high school (and later college) were mainly Jepani, the first steady one from McKinley High School, who like me, had a passion for literature and nature. On the night of her graduation, we slept together overnight on Puʻu ʻŌhiʻa, in the middle of a bamboo forest, and I experienced for the first time the intense pleasure of sex; it felt like entering a warm, embracing ocean, a milky womb-like sea. Sometimes we parked at night at the Pali Lookout or on the old Pali road. Ala Moana Park was another favorite high school hangout. The park was safe at night in the 1960s, a haven for young lovers. We made out with our girlfriends in cars, or outdoors on blankets beneath the stars.

Despite a tendency among people of the same ethnicity to stick together, interethnic marriages have become increasingly commonplace in Hawaiʻi. The 2000 census reported that over one-third of married couples and over half of the unmarried couples were ethnically mixed. About forty-five percent of the population identified themselves as having mixed ancestries. Half of these persons of mixed ancestries had Hawaiian blood; many reported more than two ethnicities; and nearly fifty percent of the babies born in Hawaiʻi were mixed. Nationally, the percentages of mixing in all these categories were much lower.

A number of factors have contributed to this interethnic mixing: mixed neighborhoods and schools, weakening prejudices as the early immigrant groups moved further away from the ethnocentrism of the first generation of immigrants, and the passing of years since the divisive era of the plantations and haole rule. Over the last century and a half, the various groups have shared common historical experiences and a common homeland.

As World War II faded into history and Japan became an ally of America, and as Hawaiʻi became a popular destination for Japanese tourists, the stereotype of the devious Jap enemy was less often expressed (though still present in the American imagination and media depictions; – stereotypes and prejudices have remarkable persistence in popular culture). And Jepanis have become less ethnocentric: of the 296,674 people identifying themselves

as having Japanese ancestry in 2000, thirty-two percent were ethnically mixed. (People of other ancestries in Hawai‘i reported higher percentages of ethnic-mixing: thirty-four percent of African Americans reported they were ethnically mixed; thirty-eight percent of haoles; thirty-eight percent of Filipinos; forty-three percent of Koreans; forty-three percent of Sāmoans; sixty-six percent of Hawaiians; sixty-seven percent of the Chinese, who, of the Asian ethnic groups, have been here the longest.)

While social relationships are increasingly mixed, ethnocentrism persists for some in marriage preferences. A fifth-generation Jepani student in one of my writing classes told me her grandmother advised her, as my grandmother had advised me, to “marry Jepani”; and this student planned to – her Jepani boyfriend was taking the class with her. Such ethnocentrism is perhaps the only way for a group of immigrant ancestry to maintain a distinct identity so far from its ancestral homeland; or in the case of the kānaka maoli, to maintain a distinct identity in their colonized homeland. (In the 2000 census, 80,000 people reported themselves solely as Hawaiian; but recent estimates of the number of pure-blooded Hawaiians is much lower – between 6,000 to 8,000. Some predict that by the middle of the twenty-first century, no one will be of purely indigenous ancestry.)

For the Jepani, what would be the purpose of following a grandparent’s advice to “marry Jepani”? To maintain ethnic pride and identity? To perpetuate cultural traditions of the nineteenth century, rooted 3,000 miles away, whose main social function seems to be to express and mark ethnic identity? While this conservatism might add to cultural diversity in Hawai‘i, a less rigid attitude than “marry Jepani” or “stick with your own kind” seems socially healthier, allowing for interplay between the possibilities of maintaining ethnicity, or of mixing culturally, socially, and/or genetically – the colors and shades of mixing to be the choice of each individual.

One thing that makes living in Hawai‘i comfortable is that while people might have ethnic preferences about who he or she, or his or her children or grandchildren, should or should not associate with or marry, few people seem to have strong feelings about what people outside the immediate family should do; it’s pretty much live and let live. (It would be totally bizarre for anyone in Hawai‘i to oppose interracial marriages in general and to go around shooting mixed couples, as has been reported in other places in America.)

In a European context, where multicultural states and ethnic tensions are on the rise, Pascal Bruckner advocates “a degree of porousness” in matters of culture as opposed to the “double dogmatism of openness or exclusion.” He notes that since “the state of the world prevents any one society from permanently isolating itself, porousness would establish the proper balance between closemindedness and curiosity which engenders creative shocks and fascinating dissonances.” (One wonders what Bruckner thinks about interethnic or interfaith marriages – does his call for “porousness” include mixing genes and ancestors?)

Being porous is not easy for those trained to think in simplistic either/or terms, rather than in the ambiguities of neither/nor or both/and. But in reality, all ethnic groups and communities are already genetically and culturally mixed to varying degrees. During the millennia of migrations out of the African homeland and travels hither and yon, exploring across borders and boundaries, or backtracking and retreating, groups have exchanged food, goods, songs, stories, information, ideas, and genes.

Racial, ethnic, and cultural purity are mental constructs, with labels used to delineate political-historical divisions and to justify hierarchy and oppression or to motivate groups to protect, acquire, or regain ancestral territories, entitlements, and rights from other groups.

In October 2002, I was hanging out with friends in Kāneʻohe on the night of Castle High School's homecoming football game against Kahuku, so I dropped by with a friend who also graduated from Castle. I hadn't been on the football field in over thirty-three years – since our graduation ceremony in 1969 when, as senior class president, I led the graduates in my last, perfunctory Pledge of Allegiance. ("With liberty and justice for all" sounded good, but I could do without "under God," which was added during the Cold War to emphasize a difference between God-fearing Americans and God-less commies and atheists.) I was in a daze that afternoon, coming down from a speed-mescaline trip I had been on since the day before.

In 2002, the field looked a little different, with a new gym and new bleachers built after I graduated. But when the misty rain of Kāneʻohe swept across the field in gusting trade winds, I was transported back in time. It was a similar wet night when our club's float was entered in the homecoming parade: a Volkswagen Bug decorated with the theme "Smoke 'Em." On the roof was a giant hand with a half-smoked cigarette, sculpted from chicken wire and tissue-paper flowers. Melting dry ice was supposed to create an illusion of smoke coming from the cigarette tip, but the apparatus we contrived out of an old paint bucket and a piece of garden hose didn't work the way we wanted it to. The winning float that year was a car decorated as a cute, socially acceptable bunny, with big eyes and floppy ears.

Mingling with the crowd in 2002, I felt at home again. The students and adults looked like former classmates. I still felt like a part of that tribe. The pep squad girls were a multicultural mix, and the football boys, who made it to the state championship game that year for the first time in the school's fifty-year history, had last names like Ramos, Mansanas, Kalauokaaea, Suzui, Sebay, Ho, Kanahele, Lopez, Watanabe, Lefiti, and Agcaoili. Sometime after my graduation, the team's name had changed from Knights to Black Knights, which I thought was cool because we never saw ourselves as White Knights. The dark-haired, brown-skinned homecoming court was led by Queen Erin Kimura and King Kelly Amodo – shades of my classmates Vicky Iwamoto and

Richard Abasial! (A scrappy, but overmatched Castle team lost to a beefier St. Louis team in the public-vs.-private-school state football championship game that year, 34-15.)

In 2002, there were fewer haoles and Jepanis than when I was at Castle. The birthrate has been declining among middle-class Jepanis, and more Jepanis are sending their kids to private schools and intermarrying. There were more students of Filipino and mixed ancestries. The friend I was with had a cousin whose Jepani-haole daughter was graduating from Castle that year and going to college at the University of Oregon.

Being at the old high school reminded me how much I appreciated those Kāneʻohe days, growing up in a mixed neighborhood and going to public schools. The experience had made me more "porous," less susceptible to holding to the ethnic and class prejudices we acquired from family, community, and the media. On Keaʻahala Road, kids got to know one another and played together before prejudices became walls. Later, the public schools provided a place for daily interactions among diverse students from the middle- and low-income classes, representing a full range of physical, intellectual, and social abilities and gender identities.

As we got older, prejudices and discrimination became more prevalent. Not all of our prejudices were rooted in ethnicity or class. In the late 1960s Castle had a māhū gang made up of five or so guys who had nicknamed themselves "Tinkerbelle," "Clarabelle," etc. They were not afraid to be out of the closet and sometimes they were on parade. Generally, they were accepted as part of the scene, but they suffered from harassment and verbal abuse by a few guys who seemed to feel a need to establish their manhood by picking on gays. "Fag" and "māhū" could be used more virulently than "haole" or "Jap."

Even more marginalized and shunned were the MRs, or Mentally Retarded, who were kept in a separate classroom at a corner of the school, as if they were contagious or represented something shameful. "Retarded," which may once have had a neutral meaning like "late or slow in developing," had become highly pejorative, as had the euphemistic label MR. Earlier in the twentieth century the pidgin-speaking and bilingual children of immigrants, in comparison to "Caucasian monoglots," had been stigmatized as *retarded* in acquiring the English language (Kanae). Today public school educators have integrated "students with special needs" into classes with other students, with uncertain results.

Social separation and isolation make it easier to denigrate or demonize groups deemed unworthy, the first steps toward oppression or violence. It allows groups with more power to justify oppressing groups with less power, often through psychological, social, and economic exclusion; and groups with less power to justify physical retaliation, sometimes deadly.

But many middle-class parents, including intellectuals who profess working class solidarity because of their immigrant and plantation heritages and who promote local culture and pidgin English, are sending their children

to private schools for a narrower, safer, less challenging social experience among standard-English-speaking students of a similar or higher social class. When outsiders become insiders, they want the advantages and privileges that go with being insiders (for example, "a better education" for their children in private schools).

Hawai'i has a higher rate of private school enrollment than the national average – one in six students vs. one in eight. Not surprisingly, the proportions of students from low-income and immigrant families, along with students with special needs, are rising in the public schools. To the extent that ethnicity correlates with wealth and power (haoles and local Asians generally with more, kānaka maoli and those of Pacific islands ancestry with less), these enrollment trends will result in wider ethnic and class divisions.

The public schools are struggling with diminishing funding and middle-class support and higher costs to educate the growing number of special needs students. The middle-class teachers and administrators are hindered by a lack of social experience and training to work with the wide diversity of students they encounter, as well as by a lack of a vision of education that goes beyond raising reading and math test scores. Educators need to focus on the content and experience of education, not test scores: if schools were places where students could study something important, meaningful, and relevant to their lives, they might be motivated to learn. Kafka's Hunger Artist explains the reason he didn't eat: "I couldn't find a food which I enjoyed. If had found that, believe me, I would not have made a spectacle of myself and would have eaten to my heart's content, like you and everyone else."

Despite its struggles and shortcomings, the public schools represent the best opportunity and hope for creating a more open, egalitarian, and inclusive community because their student bodies represent the community more fully than do the student bodies in private schools.

My public school experience was memorable, valuable, and mostly fun. What I valued most was the social interactions among friends and classmates, and learning about the range of people who make up our community. I can see how this community, rooted in colonialism, emerged from a web of local, national, and international actions, events, and processes driven mostly by the forces of global capitalism. These events have played out in unique and significant ways in the islands; we were and are living at the unfolding edge of an amazing story.

But none of our teachers connected what we were experiencing outside the classroom with the knowledge we acquired from books, or vice versa. What mattered most to the teachers was textbook knowledge, produced elsewhere. Did it occur to any of them that there ought to be a connection between experience and learning or that learning might be motivated by making education relevant to what for many of us is at the core of our identities –

ancestry, family, community, and place? If our social and cultural studies had not been predominantly about haoles and far-off haole places, if all the students and their families had felt included in the curriculum, more students might have been engaged in learning and open to the notion that we all belong to one community.

Where to Go, What to Do

Seventeen-and-a-half years old – an age of change and wonder. After high school graduation I had to figure out what to do. My parents wanted me to go to college, but beyond that, their only advice was "do what makes you happy."

One thing that made me happy was moving out of my parents' house. I wanted to be free from their authority. Freedom and individualism are the foundations of American culture. We had been taught how the pilgrims fled religious authority and persecution in their homeland and set sail for freedom in the New World; how the American colonists fought a War of Independence for political freedom from their British Motherland; how nineteenth-century abolitionists and blacks fought against slavery; how America was built by free individuals, willing to leave home, defy authority, invent new ways of doing things, and become different from and better than their parents and everyone else – always on the move to find the best opportunities.

In a traditional society, I might have pursued my father's occupation or taken over a family business. Instead, I was given the freedom to choose a career, based on personal interest and talent. Even if I decided on the same occupation as my father, I would have to learn it in college, not from him, because his knowledge and training were obsolete.

Once away from home, we were free to choose not only a career, but an identity from what Jonathan Raban calls "The Emporium of Styles." Living among strangers in cities that offer new opportunities and possibilities, young people are

> ... barraged with images of the people we might become. Identity is presented as plastic, a matter of appearances and possessions; a very large proportion of the urban landscape is taken up by slogans, advertisements, flatly photographed images of folk heroes – the man who turned into a sophisticated dandy overnight by drinking a particular brand of vodka, the girl who transformed herself into a latter-day Mata Hari with a squirt of cheap perfume.

Newspapers, magazines, novels, TV programs, and movies show us how to become new persons by wearing your hair a certain way, buying certain kinds of clothing, music, art, or furniture, and imitating a particular kind of behavior and speech.

If the young can't be in the cities where the latest fashions and styles are created, the next best thing is to replicate the fashions and styles in their

hometowns. Dressing like and mimicking those we see in the media mark us as being "modern," "hip," "in." (Ironically, what we think of as freedom and individualism is usually merely imitation.)

In high school we adopted the counterculture identity that dominated the national media imagery of our baby-boomer generation in the late 60s: long hair, rock-'n'-roll, drugs, and a vocabulary that included words like "far out," "heavy," "right on," "groovy," "trippy," and "stony."

When I entered college, I hadn't decided on a career. While I was in high school, I thought I might become a doctor because tests showed I had an aptitude for math and science, and I did well in biology and chemistry. No one in my family was a doctor, but I grew up watching TV shows like *Ben Casey* and *Dr. Kildare*, and these fictional doctors seemed to lead interesting, respectable lives. My parents encouraged this career interest because doctors had a high social status and income.

On career day I went to visit hospitals and meet doctors to find out what they actually did. I was less than inspired when we were shown two lungs in plastic bags to illustrate the difference between a soft, pinkish healthy lung of a non-smoker and a leathery, gray, diseased lung of a smoker. I felt queasy touching these body parts, even though they were sealed in plastic. Body parts, blood, excretions, diseased people, dead things – I found them repulsive. Although I put down pre-med on my college application, becoming a doctor would not have been a good career choice for me.

I liked English classes more than science classes. Science experiments had predetermined answers; we weren't taught to go beyond the textbook, to explore the world in a meaningful way. In tenth grade my brother turned in a Science Fair project based on the research question "Can Fish Live in Beer?" His inquiring mind wanted to know. His display in the library featured bottles with dead mosquito fish floating in various concentrations of beer and water. I found literature more engaging than science: it allowed the imagination to play and was open to interpretation and argument, which I enjoyed.

After reading James Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* in my senior year, I thought I might want to become an artist like Stephen Dedalus. Unable to detect irony at that young and impressionable age, I was inspired by what Joyce wrote about Dedalus:

> He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world.
>
> He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable.

> The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.
>
> Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.

Back then freedom, creativity, and individualism seemed to be the ultimate values, and these could be expressed by my becoming a writer and artist. (Later I realized that freedom by itself is the most self-centered and egotistical of values, that it needs to be balanced with connections to family, community, and place; with a sense of tradition and obligations to ancestors; and with responsibility to people and planet.)

I imagined myself living in a small apartment in some big city, detached, God-like, creating something "new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable." "Smithy of my soul" sounded good, even though I had never been in a smithy and didn't believe in souls. Nor was I sure about "my race." When I was a freshman in college, a friend from Hong Kong doing a survey for her sociology class asked me whether I considered myself Japanese or American. The question struck me as odd. I told her I was neither. "I'm local… local Japanese." I felt the pull of place more than race, and nation less than either. "Japanese American," which became a common term later, didn't express who I was. If I had known Hawaiian back in college, I might have told her I was "Kepanī" – the indigenous term for residents from Japan.

After looking over a bunch of college catalogues in my senior year, I realized how much I disliked filling out application forms, so I did what was easiest: I sent in one application to the University of Hawai'i. Most of my high school buddies weren't going to college, so which one I went to wasn't a big deal to me. Tuition at UH was relatively cheap back then (about $100 a semester), so I didn't need a scholarship.

I moved into a termite-eaten, roach-infested three-bedroom house on Tenth Avenue in Kaimukī with some friends. We started out with five guys, and after four months, there were ten, splitting the rent, which came out to about $25 per person. Three of us were attending classes at the university and working part-time; the others were working.

Now that I had escaped my parents, my focus was not on college and a career, but on playing out the counterculture identity we adopted in high school. We partied – drinking beer and cheap wine, smoking marijuana, and popping uppers, downers, mescaline, and acid, while listening to our favorite record albums over and over again – Jimi Hendrix; Led Zeppelin; the Beatles; Santana; Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. A party crowd of friends and friends-of-friends dropped by every weekend. Mackey Feary, who later became a

well-known singer and songwriter for the band Kalapana, came by late one night and sang some renditions of Neil Young and others in his sweet, silky voice. (After a long struggle against drug addiction, Feary hanged himself in prison in 1999; he had survived much longer than Hendrix, who died of a sleeping pill overdose in 1970, a year after I saw him perform at the Waikīkī Shell.)

The friend who provided me with uppers and downers was a fellow student at UH. She got them from a friend who sold them from a parking booth in Waikīkī where he worked. Whenever she came over to deliver the drugs, she slept with me. Once, when the house was too crowded, we went across the street to the Epiphany Church.

A block down Tenth Avenue, at another house, some college students (including my brother) were playing at being revolutionaries. Their heroes were Marx, Mao, and Che. Like the Black Panthers and other radical American groups they read about, they thought they were going to become a revolutionary force. They had some guns and took them up to the mountains to practice shooting for a revolution that would never happen.

Drugs, particularly psychedelics, and rock music interested me more than revolution. Revolution was just a slogan to me; I wasn't going to kill anyone or blow anything up. Drugs, on the other hand, were real. I sprouted and potted some marijuana plants at my parents' house in Kāneʻohe, using techniques for growing corn I learned in my eighth grade agriculture class. Afraid my parents would discover the marijuana plants, I gave most of them away to a friend from Kalani High School. He hid them at his cottage behind his parents' house in ʻĀina Haina. It was a very potent crop. He went into business selling pot to his friends.

I took one plant to the house on Tenth Avenue. After harvesting the first batch of leaves and buds, I was going to dry them outside in the sun. Biff, who was just back from Vietnam, told me he knew how to dry the leaves faster by putting them in the oven under low heat. I really didn't think that was necessary, as I had a stash and didn't need more right away, but he insisted on showing me this drying technique he had learned in Vietnam. He ended up scorching the leaves and buds. "It's still good," he said, as they crumbled into small black flakes when he tried to break them up. I gave the batch to him.

Biff was the only haole in our club in high school. When he came back from the war, he wanted to move in with us so badly, he set up his bed on the porch, the only place left, and slept there with his pa-ke girlfriend. He told us that he'd gotten addicted to heroine in Vietnam, but he never used any when he lived with us.

We started using psychedelic drugs like LSD in high school because pop culture gurus and stars told us psychedelics would expand our minds, even

blow our minds, which was supposedly a good idea. The acid tabs had names like Orange Sunshine and Purple Haze. ("Feeling funny, but I don't know why," Jimi Hendrix sang in "Purple Haze," "'Scuse me while I kiss the sky.") One night at a party, we took some Orange Sunshine, then smoked some opium. As I looked at people, their skins became transparent, and I could see their organs and the blood flowing through their veins. I decided to go into a bedroom to lie down. As I stared at some photos of British rock stars taped to the wall, their faces turned into the faces of apes. Later I was feeling a little more composed and went outside. It was just past midnight, but the sky above Keahiakahoe was bright orange – as if the atomic blast we had been anticipating since elementary school had occurred just behind the Koʻolau range. The haole boyfriend of one of our friends from Punahou came to talk with me. He had wings attached to his shoulders, like an angel.

After three years in the counterculture scene, it began to lose its appeal. In college I began to find reading more interesting than drugs. I was introduced to Dostoevsky, Kafka, Sartre, Camus, Eliot, Pound, Melville, Thoreau, Whitman, Bashō, and other writers, and became fascinated by the array of ideas, information, and ways of thinking and living they presented.

The last time I took acid, my roommate Paul and I drove to Paumalū to sleep in a cow pasture above Sunset Beach. I knew about this place because my father used to work at an RCA radio receiving station there and had taken me with him one night on his graveyard shift. Up early the next morning, I enjoyed a beautiful and peaceful sunrise with the cows.

As Paul and I hiked up the dirt road under a sky full of stars, he was complaining his ass had fallen off. Circles of geography were disintegrating in my mind, like smoke rings in still air. I had no idea where home was. I started thinking about my Volkswagen Bug, parked back at the locked gate. I couldn't figure out how a car operated and wondered how I would drive it home. I was slipping in and out of consciousness; the only thing I could remember clearly was a promise I made to Paul to bring some marijuana. After we climbed the fence and laid down in the grass, I stuck my hand into my pocket and felt the bag of marijuana there. I held onto it for life, like Ishmael on Queequeg's coffin, until I faded into sleep. The next morning, the pasture was wet with dew. Paul was asleep a short ways off, wrapped in his sleeping bag. Cow-pies were scattered around us. The sunrise was beautiful.

Shortly after that acid trip, Randy, one of our friends from Puʻunui came over to the Tenth Avenue house to ask me to serve as his alibi. Earlier that night he had gone to Oʻahu Country Club to rip off golf clubs with his gang, which included his buddies Pee-Wee, who wasn't small, and Goo-Goo. A night guard confronted them. He happened to be a former classmate of Randy's at Punahou – the same guy who appeared to me with angel wings while I was on acid. He told the boys to put the clubs back or he would call the cops. Randy and the boys told him "Fuck you" and left. Now Randy wanted me to tell the cops he was hanging out with me all night. I didn't want to lie to a cop or a judge, but

I said okay. After Randy left, I got to thinking about how this life was going nowhere, and I needed a change.

Soon after, I moved out of the Tenth Avenue house and went back home. Randy's case never came up. Perhaps Alex had second thoughts about turning him in.

One of the books that interested me at this time was *Walden*. I liked the passage in which Thoreau ridicules burdensome and unnecessary material possessions:

> When I have met an immigrant tottering under a bundle which contained his all, – looking like an enormous wen which had grown out of the nape of his neck, – I have pitied him, not because that was his all, but because he had all that to carry.

The image of the grown-out wen stuck in my mind. I began to develop a dislike for unnecessary goods. I gave up surfing partly because I didn't want to have to lug around a surfboard anymore. When an acquaintance from high school (a guy who suffered from Tourette's Syndrome) borrowed my nine-foot Hansen and didn't bring it back, I didn't bother to go look for it – one less thing to worry about. I hadn't been surfing for a while, anyway. I heard that the surf spots had gotten crowded and occasionally violent, with guys competing for waves. When we first started surfing, everyone was mellow, and whoever had the best position took the wave. Now the most popular spots had hierarchies and rules about who could take off on a wave and who had to wait. Those who broke the rules got beaten up. I was tired of that scene.

My brother thought Thoreau was a fake because the New Englander had used nails to build his house at Walden while pretending to "go back to Nature"; I agreed, but found Thoreau's ideas interesting anyway – a way out of the mindless and insistent consumerism of American life.

Growing up, I experienced the greedy glee of getting presents at Christmas: toy guns and soldiers and model warplanes and ships, which within a year were broken, trashed, or forgotten in the closet – just in time for new presents to replace them. We blew up our old model planes and ships with firecrackers on New Year's Eve.

In my early teens, our gang coveted things; if we couldn't buy them, we stole them. We took what we wanted from drugstores and supermarkets – mainly snacks like dried cuttlefish, mango seeds, and candies and the latest Marvel comic books: Spider Man, Dare Devil, the X-Men, and the Fantastic Four.

We started riding to Honolulu on the big black taxi that left from the Cracked Seed Center in Kāneʻohe and dropped us off across the street from

the newly constructed Fort Street Mall. Once there, we went to movies and roamed around town. Eventually we discovered the porn shops and the Busy Bee and Roosevelt Theater, where we saw our first x-rated movie, a black and white film of a black woman and white guy getting it on. We began stealing and compiling a collection of pornographic and nudist magazines, which we stashed in a plastic pouch in a banana patch near the park where we hung out after school. Someone left the pouch open one day and rainwater got in; the pages got stuck together, and bugs made house in the dark, wet pouch.

After watching some cat burglar movies, I decided to steal some coins and bills from a locked case at a downtown department store. I planned to sell the loot to get cash. (One writer aptly describes juvenile delinquents as teenage capitalists.) I asked the clerk to show me a coin from the case and watched where she kept the key. The following week, after school, I caught the taxi to town, got the key from the drawer, and took a bunch of coins and bills, which, according to the prices, were worth a couple hundred dollars. I thought I had struck it rich, but when I tried to sell the loot to a coin dealer on Bishop Street, he told me the three Roosevelt dimes priced at $25 by the store were worth 30 cents, and the rest of the coins (mainly silver dollars) were worth only their face value as well. The Confederate dollar bill was counterfeit and worth nothing. It was an interesting lesson about a marketing system motivated by profits, and perhaps at times even greed.

The biggest thing I stole was a surfboard. When I was in the ninth grade, a hapa-haole tenth grader offered to take me surfing with him – my first time out. At the beach he asked me to steal a board, which, he said, he was going to re-shape and re-glass, so no one would be able to identify it as stolen. Then he would let me use it when he took me surfing again. We ended up at Ala Moana Bowls that day, where I stole a board for him. About a month later he phoned and told me he wanted me to pay him $20 for "storage," since he was risking getting arrested for holding onto stolen property. His attempted extortion caught me by surprise. I cut out from school the next day and walked over to his house. His big brown dog was chained up near the surfboard. I climbed up a stone wall, and walked on it until I was near the board. The dog was barking and leaping up at me. I jumped off the wall, grabbed the board, and ran. As the dog charged, the chain jerked him back, choking him. I was prepared to whack him in the head with the board if he had laid a tooth on me. I dumped the board in some bushes on the way back to school. Twenty bucks, my ass.

My career as a teenage capitalist ended after I got caught at a drugstore in Kāneʻohe trying to steal my monthly supply of Marvel comics. I was going to wrap them in some brown paper with a fake address, then walk out. As I was ripping open some tape, a piece of which I was going to use to seal the package and the rest to put stripes on my skateboard, the store manager walked by. Shit, nabbed. Since I hadn't actually left the store, he didn't call the cops but asked me to pay for the tape. If I had any money I could have paid for it and he would have let me go. I would have continued shoplifting. Since I didn't have any

money, he called my parents and told them to come and pay for it.

At home I got a repetitive two-hour lecture from my father about how stealing is wrong. After that he called the family into the kitchen and made me apologize to them for bringing shame on us – one of the worse things that I could have done, according to Japanese tradition, even though outside the family only the store manager knew about my attempted shoplifting. My father believed strongly in "Thou shalt not steal." Once he harangued my brother for hours for picking lychee from someone else's tree, even though the fruit was hanging over a fence, technically in public air space.

When I thought about my thefts later, I realized I didn't really need any of the things I took. At first, we shoplifted as a way of getting what we wanted and perhaps for the thrill of stealing. After a while it was so easy that we stole out of habit. After I got caught, it no longer seemed worth the trouble.

In my first year of college, my father was diagnosed with lung cancer. He was healthy and robust in his youth, a star half-back on the Maui High School football team. But he started smoking when he was in the sixth grade; at forty-one, he had been smoking two packs of unfiltered Camels a day for years and had other unhealthy habits, like drinking six beers a day, plus a case or two on weekends, and eating meats preserved in sodium nitrite. He was also overweight and didn't exercise. And the fiberglass particles he inhaled while working on his boats without a mask may have damaged his lungs.

He went through the full range of treatments for cancer – surgery, chemotherapy, radiation treatments. Nothing stopped its spread through his body. He slowly wasted away, becoming thinner and thinner. Wearing his old plaid bathrobe draped like a loose rag over the pointed angles of his shoulders, he looked like a scarecrow; he had a funny chemical smell. Every now and then he would ask me to massage his legs. His calves were soft and spongy. I remembered how when I was a child I would hang from his biceps, which he flexed to make hard. He told me his biceps were hard-boiled eggs.

The tobacco industry was partly to blame for his death; it admitted in the 1990s that it had chemically altered cigarettes to make them more addictive and held back information on the dangers of smoking.

I started smoking when I was twelve or thirteen years old, with my older brother and his friends. Advertising and Hollywood movies encouraged us to start: we thought it was so cool and tough to smoke – like the cowboys, soldiers, and gangsters we saw on TV, cigarettes hanging from their lips. I became addicted, smoking a pack a day. I enjoyed the warm smoke flowing into and out of my lungs, along with the mild euphoria induced when the chemicals rode the blood stream to my brain. I wasn't surprised to find out later that the tobacco plant is sacred to some Native American tribes. I liked the sweetish smell of tobacco – both unburnt and burning. I liked watching the bluish smoke rising from the red-hot tip, curling into wisps before vanishing. I

learned to blow smoke rings, neat Os, and enjoyed lying in bed and watching them wobble apart like bicycle tires disintegrating.

My parents and I waged a battle over my smoking, part of my youthful rebellion against them. They tried to get my brother and I to stop because, they said, it was bad for our health. If it was bad for the health, why did they smoke? They said they were adults, so they had the right to choose; when we became eighteen we could make our own decisions. But we wanted freedom now, not later. My father used to tell us, "Don't do what I do, do what I say." Instead, we did what he said when he was around, and did what he did when he wasn't.

Every now and then I would forget a cigarette pack in the pocket of some pants or a shirt, which my mother would find when she did the laundry. I got the standard lecture about the health risks; I faked contrition and made the obligatory promise to stop. Some form of punishment was meted out – weeding the yard on Saturday or staying home for the weekend or losing my allowance for the week. But I never quit.

Our cat-and-mouse game continued until one night during my senior year, when my father sat me down at the dinner table with the latest evidence – a pack with six cigarettes left. He started interrogating me about why I continued to smoke. I could tell he was getting mad because his eyes were big and round, and the veins had popped out at his temples. Suddenly he said, "Look, if you want to keep smoking, you eat those six cigarettes." I thought about it for only a few seconds and realized it was a deal I couldn't refuse – eating six cigarettes in exchange for freedom from harassment. How hard could it be to eat six cigarettes? Tobacco was only leaves, like lettuce, and I could swallow the filters, which were no larger than big pills. I began eating them. My father looked stunned and pissed and disgusted all at the same time, but said nothing. I wondered if he regretted his offer.

As I finished off the last of the six, he left the table without saying anything. I went to the bathroom and vomited, making sure all six filters came out because I thought it would feel weird to shit them out. My mother came into the bathroom to find out if I was okay. I told her yeah. She asked why I had done something so stupid. I told her I didn't know. Actually, I didn't think it was stupid, although later someone told me that tobacco is highly toxic and could kill you ate a lot.

My father kept his word and never brought up smoking again. So I continued to smoke – but never in his presence. When I got suspended from school for a day after a friend and I got caught smoking near the gym, my father didn't get upset. Perhaps he remembered that he had been expelled from Lāhainaluna Boarding School after being caught smoking and drinking in a bar in Lāhaina when he was fourteen; so a one-day suspension wasn't that bad.

The year he died of cancer, I quit smoking. Other than that, I didn't think his death affected me all that much. Looking back years later, I realized that it was from that time that I began to think more seriously about how to live well

and how to die well.

The original language dissolves from the exhaustion of distance,
like fog trying to cross an ocean.

—Derek Walcott, "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory"

Before he died my father told my mother he wanted her to take us kids to visit the ancestral homeland. This was a surprise to me because when we were growing up, he never talked about Japan and never encouraged us to learn about our ancestral language or culture.

In the winter of 1970, with some money from several life insurance policies my parents had bought from my uncle to help him out, my mother took us to Japan. At Tōkyō's Haneda Airport, the first thing that struck me was how everyone looked like us. Having grown up in a multiethnic community, I found it odd. We blended in with the crowd until we spoke. I had taken a semester of Japanese at the University of Hawai'i in preparation for the trip and could speak at about the level of a three-year-old, or someone mentally retarded.

Roy Hiroshige, an "uncle" who had lived with my mother's family in Hilo in the 1930s, met us at the airport and took us to breakfast and then to our hotel. Roy was the brother of my father's two fishing buddies. Right after World War II, he and a friend bought some surplus laundry equipment from the U.S. military, shipped it to Tōkyō, and started a profitable laundry business. He eventually built a big two-story house in Shibuya.

The next day we flew to Hiroshima to visit the ancestral towns in the countryside nearby. An old relation from my mother's side of the family met us at the airport, then put us in a taxi that took us through harvested rice fields to a small town my mother referred to as Mukaihara-machi.

That evening it began snowing, a first for us kids. At dinner we sat on the floor around a large table next to the kitchen, our feet warmed by a fire in a pit built into the floor beneath the table. There was a cozy feeling of family. When my mother was growing up, her parents spoke Japanese at home, so she knew enough to converse with the relatives. I wanted to know more about the family past, but with my limited knowledge of Japanese, I couldn't understand the stories – who did what, who went where, who was doing what now. The words were like vague figures in a fog, walking away, already too distant to be recognized.

Tired from travel, we went to bed early, bundled up in futons on the tatami mats of a second-story room. I got up early the next morning, just before sunrise, and slid open the shoji window to look outside. I felt like I was inside a landscape from one of the Japanese folktales I had read as a kid. The narrow streets of the hillside town were still dark, and the tile roofs, the pine and cedar trees, and the rice fields beyond were covered with snow. A river flowed

through the valley. My family's last name "Kawaharada," which means "river-rice-fields," made sense in this landscape.

In the days following we visited relatives and family graves; at one stop, a distant cousin took us up a steep stone stairway to visit the village Shintō shrine. He bowed and clapped his hands twice, then bowed again in front of the plain wooden hut to let the local kami know we had arrived to pay our respects. The hut was empty except for some paintings of warships – a reminder of the Japanese militarists who led the Japanese into wars of conquests, brutal atrocities, and a humiliating defeat.

Later on the trip, in Kyōto, we spent New Year's Eve as part of a crowd surging into Yasaka Shrine to light pieces of rope in a medicinal herbal fire, so that they could take the fire home to light the hearth and ensure good health for the coming year. We had no hearth in the hotel, and home was 3000 miles away, but we brought back the rope as a souvenir. We walked over to Chion-in Temple for the midnight ringing of the massive copper bell. (The bonshō is struck with a large swinging wooden beam 108 times to purge the 108 Buddhist sins.) I began to feel connected to the mass of Japanese oneness, the ancient unity of race, homeland, and culture.

When I got back to Hawai'i, I took courses in Japanese language, history, and literature, thinking I might major in Japanese to re-establish ancestral ties. Bashō became one of my favorite poets. I particularly liked his poetic travel diaries because I wanted to travel and was starting to feel somewhat homeless, a wanderer wondering where I should go and what I should do. Travel was Bashō's metaphor for life: "A lifetime adrift in a boat, or in old age leading a tired horse into the years, every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home."

And like Thoreau, Bashō recommended living and traveling lightly: "With no real home of my own, I wasn't interested in accumulating treasures. And since I traveled empty-handed, I didn't have to worry much about robbers."

The books and media I consumed filled me with ideas about places to go, things to see. In October 1972, I made a return trip to Japan and went to a quaint hot-springs town called Ikaho, which I read about in a travel guidebook. I took a train to Gunma from Tōkyō, then a bus up into the mountainous countryside of harvested rice fields and maple and oak trees turning red and yellow (my first season of falling leaves). I stayed in a Japanese inn for a couple of nights, then rented a room in a small house near a stream.

Naoto, the innkeeper's son, found the room for me because he thought staying at the ryokan for two weeks would be too expensive. He took me around in his spare time – he seemed interested in getting to know this stranger from America and introducing me to our ancestral homeland. He was a baseball fan and recruited me to play "kachi-boru" with him and pitch to his kid brother during his lunch break at the inn.

One night he took me to a meeting where some young people were discussing the Japanese economy and the future of Japan. They were very earnest – the generation that would join their parents and grandparents in turning Japan into a global economic power, a drive that started in the previous century during the Meiji Restoration and was set back by the devastation of World War II. When we were children, "made in Japan" was an insult meaning "cheap and shoddy"; when a toy broke, we jeered, "made in Japan!" By the time I entered college, Sony, Panasonic, Nikon, and Toyota were successfully selling well-made products worldwide and setting standards for quality.

I didn't understand the details of what Naoto's friends were discussing. I began to realize that although my ancestors were from Japan, it was no longer possible for me to go back into that society or cultural tradition. Language was the major barrier – obscure sounds and ideograms. I was learning Japanese too late in life to speak, read, or write fluently. And Japan was no longer the Japan of my grandparents or of Western books about Zen gardens and tea ceremonies; it was part of the new technological world of the capitalist global economy. Writers like Tanizaki and Kawabata lamented the passing of the old world; Ōe was exploring a new world, proclaiming his affinity to Huckleberry Finn while holding onto the Shintō gods of his native Shikoku.

I was not an enthusiast of the new world of Japanese economic expansion and technological advances; nor was I like my grandparents, who had emigrated from small towns and rice fields of early twentieth-century Hiroshima. When a harvest festival took place in Ikaho, with boys and men shouting as they danced down a steep stone stairway in the middle of town carrying a shrine on their shoulders in celebration of the local kami for producing a bountiful harvest, I was a tourist, not a participant.

Once a year, in August, during the season of O-bon, traditional Japanese families welcome the ancestral spirits back home. After the spirits are fed, they go back to the land of the dead. When we were young, our grandmother on Maui would take us to the summer O-bon celebration at the Buddhist church in Pāʻia. I have fond memories of the Japanese songs and taiko drumming, the women dressed in colorful kimono dancing in a circle around the music tower, stepping backward and forward, their arms swinging and waving, their long sleeves fluttering like butterfly wings:

> Tsuki ga deta, deta
> Tsuki ga deta, yoi! yoi!

The grounds were lit with electric lights in paper lanterns, and the delicious smells of saimin, roasted corn, and teriyaki meat from the food booths filled the night air.

One year, when I hadn't been to Maui for a while, I went to an O-bon dance at the Buddhist church in Haleʻiwa on Oʻahu. This celebration was

known for its candle ceremony: participants buy candles in cardboard lanterns and write the name of a deceased family member on each. The lanterns are launched into the sea to light the way for the spirit to return home. I bought a lantern and wrote my father's name on it. That year, instead of floating out to sea and westward to Japan, the candles came back in with the tide and waves. I took it as a sign that my father's spirit did not want to go back to Japan; he remains hovering, in my imagination, like a noio, over the ocean he loved around Hawai'i:

> I've seen you flying over your old fishing grounds
> in Kāne'ohe Bay – a noio
> whose white head reminds me
> that your hair was turning white.

After Japan, I was thinking of going to India – the birthplace of Buddhism, the religion of my grandparents and home of the mango trees I loved. But a war broke out between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, so I headed for Britain instead, the home of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, and so many other authors I had been taught to worship. I wanted to see the places they celebrated in their writings.

I planned to use *Europe on $10 a Day* to find a place to stay in London, but a young Pakistani I met on the flight from Tōkyō offered to help me get a cheap room. He was on his way back to the Netherlands, where he had married a Dutch woman. He took me to meet a balding, bespectacled Pakistani who lived in a run-down second-floor flat; he was studying for a civil service exam and seemed quite put upon by his young friend's request to help a stranger. He told us about an unoccupied room in a building nearby, more to get rid of us than to be friendly. (Later he complained to his friend about our having cut into his study time.) As it turned out, the tenant of that room, a young Dutch woman, was coming back from the continent the next day, so I moved again, this time to a house in a suburb of London. A young Pakistani couple offered to rent me the sofa in their living room for a couple of nights. The house was modern and middle class, made of red brick, with brand new furnishings. The couch was imitation leather.

So I came all this way to see British people and places, and ended up staying with Pakistanis. But this was the new England. Immigration from her former colonies was transforming England into a multiethnic state. And as in America, racial tensions and conflicts had developed – in England, between the dark-skinned immigrants from the Caribbean, South Asia, and Africa, and those fair-skinned Britons whose motto is "Keep England White."

Dutifully, I went to visit places I read about – Buckingham Palace, the Tower, Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly, the British Museum, Madame Troussaud's Wax Museum. I went to see *Othello* at a theater near the Thames. I rented a motor scooter, thinking I would ride out to Stonehenge, then realized on the

way I had started too late in the day to make it there and back before nightfall (and it was too cold); so I rode around Windsor Castle and headed back to London. I passed a bus full of schoolchildren, who were amused to see a Japanese guy on a motor scooter riding through the countryside of Merry Old England. Back then there weren't many Japanese tourists in Europe. Perhaps I was the first person of Japanese ancestry the children had ever seen; they were the first bus load of British schoolchildren I had ever seen. (When I read James Baldwin's "Stranger in the Village," about his visit to a remote Swiss village, I understood more clearly the British children's reaction to me and mine to them.)

When I got back to London late that night, the Pakistani family was asleep and I didn't have a key and didn't want to wake them up, so I decided to wander on foot around London. At a coffee shop where I rested with my head on the table, a bobby came in to tell me I could stay there only if I stayed awake. So I left and found an empty lot and went to sleep under some trees, wrapped in a used wool overcoat I bought earlier that day for my ride out to Stonehenge.

I flew to Spain next, made curious by Hemingway's bullfighting stories, Goya's somber anit-war etchings, and the strange contorted vision of El Greco's "Storm over Toledo," reproduced in color in the *World Book Encyclopedia* my mother bought when we were kids. In Madrid the bullfight I attended was a disappointment: Hemingway made bullfights sound more exciting than they really were; there was faster action at the cockfight I watched on Kea'ahala Road. Perhaps one has to be an aficionado to appreciate the ritual of killing bulls, which struck me as pompous and cruel; the bull hardly had a chance.

At the pension I stayed at near Plaza Mayor, I met Patty, a college student from New Jersey who had dropped out for a semester to study Spanish at the Berlitz Language School in Madrid. Her French-British father was a pilot for United Airlines, and her Swedish mother, a former flight attendant, was a housewife. Patty was trying to avoid a middle-aged Iberian Airlines pilot who was trying to date her. She was a quiet beauty with an impish sense of humor. She found it hilarious that one of her friends had locked grandma in a closet one day.

Patty and I decided to go traveling around Spain by train. We went from Madrid to Granada, to Seville, to Malaga, then took a ferry across the Mediterranean to the Spanish city of Ceuta and a bus to Morocco, where I wanted to go because of the song "Marrakech" by Crosby, Stills, and Nash. ("Sweeping cobwebs from the edges of my mind / Had to get away to see what we could find.") Patty and I were turned back at the border because of my long hair – the guards apparently didn't want another couple of "hippies" in Morocco. We spent the night in Ceuta; the next morning, a new shift of guards let us through.

We never made it to Marrakech. We hung out for a couple of days in Tangiers, on the north African coast. When we got off the bus, a street kid, who tried speaking to us in French and Spanish before hitting on English, offered a tour of the town and a visit to a hashish parlor. He took us through winding, narrow streets lined with shops and crowded with people, camels, and donkeys, then up a flight of stairs into a small cafe overlooking an alley. There he offered us a sample of his hashish. We smoked a pipe, to little effect. I thought perhaps it was camel dung or something, but bought a little in payment for his short tour; we would never have gone into those alleys without him. When we found a hotel, I flushed what we bought down the toilet.

The next afternoon when we were walking around town, some kids started kicking their legs up in the air shouting "ka-ra-te, ka-ra-te." Apparently, they had seen some Asian action films on TV or at the movies. They were also shouting something in Spanish. I asked Patty what they were saying. Puta – they were calling her a whore.

The next day we stopped on a hillside below some shops selling cheap shirts and djellabahs. The Mediterranean floated like blue silk at the horizon. A child approached and asked us for a peseta; I tried to ignore him, as the guidebook recommended, but he persisted, stubborn as a Sphinx with a riddle or Rumpelstiltzkin demanding a child or his name. Patty took a peseta from her coin purse and laid it in his small hand, which curled around it, a hungry crab. "Two peseta," he said, opening his hand again. The peseta was a dull copper eye in the sunlight, asking for a mate. It was my first encounter with Third World poverty and the realization that traveling is a mark of privilege. It made me uncomfortable. I felt guilty that I had more than the child, and he knew it and wasn't ashamed to beg.

We flew back to Spain and caught a train from Madrid to Paris, through mountains and hills and vineyards, past rustic farmhouses and villages. All the while I felt like I was in a dream – traveling through a world I had imagined from reading books and watching movies. In Paris we rented a cozy room near the Latin Quarter on the Left Bank. It was hard not to feel excited about being there because of the load of adulation and praise that has been heaped upon the city. Andre Aciman writes that he was in love with the city before he had ever been there: "My romance with Paris begins, as one says of earthquakes, at an epicenter – surrounded by tall, turn-of-the-century buildings, a small empty park and silent avenues. …Before I had ever set foot there, France was already my homeland, the place to which I knew I would eventually return." Paris was home to intellectuals and artists I had read about; a tourist walking on the streets of Montparnasse might run into Giacometti or Jean-Paul Sartre.

With each step into this storied world, however, it became more real to me and had less of a hold on my imagination. I went to see the impressionist paintings that I had seen in art books. Though the paintings were skillfully

executed, I had a feeling of "So now that I'm here, what?" Perhaps I was expecting some kind of spiritual experience; instead, it felt mundane. What was the purpose of visiting these places and looking at these things? So I could go back home and tell friends I had been to Paris, I saw the actual painting in this book, the actual building in that photograph? Most of the kids I grew up with couldn't care less about European art and architecture.

After a week in Paris, Patty was planning to fly home for Thanksgiving and invited me to spend the holiday with her family. She lived in an upper middle-class suburb of New Jersey, across the Washington Bridge from New York. I wanted to visit New York, another one of those places glamorized by writers like Palestinian scholar Edward Said: "Restless, turbulent, unceasingly various, energetic, unsettling, resistant, and absorptive, New York today is what Paris was a hundred years ago, the capital of our times. …the symbolic center of the world's globalized late capitalist economy whose raw power, projected economically, militarily, and politically everywhere, demonstrates how America is the only superpower today."

But New York, like Paris and Tōkyō, turned into just another city to me, though with more tall buildings and bright lights than other places. That first visit was rather ordinary: Patty took me to the American Museum of Natural History to show me the rock collection (she was a rock collector), and we went to a Rita Coolidge performance at a basement rock-'n'-roll club in Greenwich Village where Kris Kristoffersen showed up and sang with her. The only thing I bought in the city was a belt buckle from a small shop. (Like a good hippie, I was planning to make a belt and a leather bag out of half a cowhide I bought in Spain.)

I have more vivid memories of New York from a trip there in the 1990s: a scheming Chinese cab driver hustled me and a friend into his cab at the airport, then began driving us in circles around the city. His tacky deceit upset my companion terribly and she began screaming at him to let us out, far from where we were going. We had to walk to the subway carrying all our luggage. I was struck by the desperation for money that possesses people in our capitalist society.

Another striking memory: some soaring ceremonial poles carved from slender trees by one of the tribes of Papua New Guinea; the poles were exhibited in a high, glass-walled, sun-lit room at the Museum of Natural History. The exhibition stuck in my mind as a symbol of "raw power, projected economically, militarily, and politically everywhere."

After Thanksgiving, Patty wanted to drive north to Lake George to show me her parents' summer house. We traveled through a snow-covered landscape with barns and wooden fences and leafless black trees – the kind of American scenery I saw only on Christmas cards while growing up.

After we arrived at the large two-story house near the lake, we lit a fire to warm up the house, went to a supermarket to buy potatoes and steaks, and cooked dinner. We dragged a mattress from the bedroom and spent the night bundled up in the living room. The house was shut down for the winter, the furniture covered with sheets. I felt like a stranger there. I was thinking of home and tried to imagine being with Patty here. I asked Patty if she would consider coming to school in Hawai‘i. She said she would think about it.

The last time I saw Patty was in San Francisco. After I got back to Hawai‘i. I started thinking about applying to the University of California at Berkeley, perhaps to start on a medical degree, which had been an interest from high school. Actually I didn't really know what I wanted to do, having changed majors from pre-med to anthropology to English to Japanese, but I was thinking that perhaps Patty and I could enroll at a university between Hawai‘i and New Jersey, so we could hang out together and get to know each other better.

We met at the airport in San Francisco and caught a bus downtown, near the Hilton, where her father stayed when he flew into San Francisco. We walked up O'Farrell to find a room and ended up in the Tenderloin. Cars slid by like sharks past dim-lit run-down hotels, empty diners, and liquor stores with barred windows. At the first hotel we inquired at, a haggard white woman gave us the stink-eye that said, "This ain't no melting pot"; she said she had no vacancies. Out in the cold again, we followed a light into another hotel. Protected by a slotted glass window, an East Indian immigrant dressed in a sari gave us a room for seven dollars a night. We went wandering around the Tenderloin that night and ended up at a movie, *Dirty Harry*, starring Clint Eastwood. When the movie got violent, Patty walked out and waited in the lobby for me, unable to stomach the rest of it.

That night as we fell asleep, I felt like we were in a movie, on the run from cops and hiding out in a city where we had no friends or family. About midnight, a drunk began pounding on the locked door, offering us rolled oats. I said loudly, "No thanks." He continued to pound intermittently, offering his oats; after a while, the pounding stopped. The next morning we found an opened packet of rolled oats outside the door, its content spilled out on the worn carpet.

We caught a bus across the Bay Bridge to the Berkeley campus; I was half-expecting to see student protests, for which the campus was known in the 60s, but it was peaceful – a typical college scene. I went to the Department of Biology to check out its program, but the office was closed. We wandered down Telegraph Avenue, with its street musicians, cheap eateries, and students handing out flyers, then left. After riding buses around San Francisco and checking out a couple of plays, we parted. Patty decided to re-enroll at her old college in New Jersey; I re-enrolled at the University of Hawai‘i. The American notion of falling in love with a person and giving up family, community, and home to be with that person struck me as silly.

During the mid-1960s the war against Commies that America had been trying to brainwash us to fight became a reality when the government began sending troops to Vietnam after fabricating a provocation known as the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. By the early 70s, the war was raging. We were supposed to volunteer to go and kill the Commies – if not, we would be drafted. But the brainwashing hadn't worked that well on me and other young people. Many were against the war and resisting the draft. Some of the veterans of World War II were angry that we weren't willing to go. But we could see that Vietnam was a different kind of war from World War II. Germany and Japan had invaded other countries and committed atrocities, so it seemed right that America and its allies drove their armies back to their own countries. (Germany and Japan were just doing what America, Britain, France, the Netherlands, and other imperialist nations had done in the nineteenth century – grabbing other people's territory to increase their own power and wealth.)

But the conflict in Vietnam was a civil war; America had no right to be there. When our leaders told us we should save the South Vietnamese from the evil communists, we wondered why the Vietnamese couldn't do that for themselves – if that was what they really wanted. The U.S. military was there to set up a puppet government in the South to control resources and markets in Asia for American capitalists, who were already among the wealthiest people in the world. Why did they need more wealth? The Viet Cong were fighting for independence and self-determination – the same political values for which Americans had fought against Britain in 1776. The hypocrisy of America's opposition to Vietnamese (and Cuban) independence was blatant, though apparently many Americans couldn't detect it.

In 1973, I asked my draft board for a hearing to argue for a deferment. My brother had already gotten one as a conscientious objector to the war. In my letter, which I recognized later as silly, I claimed I couldn't be in the military because I was hostile to authority and incapable of following orders. I thought my independence and individualism would appeal to the board's patriotism. At the hearing, the chair looked at my file and said, "Since you're in college, you already have a deferment" and sent me home. Later the government decided to draft us by a lottery of birth dates. My birth date was picked fairly early so there was a possibility I would be drafted after graduating from college, if the war wasn't over by then.

Instead of waiting with uncertainty, I decided to apply for a medical deferment based on a spinal defect that, according to my doctor, appeared in an x-ray I took to qualify for a summer job at a hospital. (The doctor, I found out much later, had misread the x-ray.) I went to Fort DeRussy in Waikīkī and stood in line in my boxer shorts for a medical exam with the young men who had been called up. Before I could get my back evaluated, I flunked the hearing test. I had lost hearing at high frequencies from a chronic sinus infection and

sneezing fits caused by an allergy to household dust and mold. (Mold was rampant in wet, rainy Kāne‘ohe.) I was given a medical deferment – couldn’t follow orders if I couldn’t hear them.

The war ended when America’s will to win collapsed. With violent anti-war protests dividing the nation and with mounting casualties in Vietnam, the majority of Americans no longer believed there was any reason for American troops to die there. The last soldiers fled the embassy in Saigon by helicopter in 1975.

Fighting for their homeland, the Viet Cong had refused to give up. The Communists in the south and north, representing the peasant and working classes, overpowered the middle and upper classes and their American allies. The majority won and that seemed fair to me.

The Vietnamese suffered casualties that ran into the millions, not to mention the devastation of their cities, towns, fields, and forests, which had been blasted with napalms and sprayed with a toxic defoliant that is still contaminating the food supply.

On the American side, there were far fewer casualties: 58,000 dead and 153,000 wounded. In the end, over a decade of American military action had caused immense human suffering and destruction, yet accomplished nothing. The tragic stupidity of America’s leaders, driven by their greed for hands-on global control, showed me once again how those in authority could be wrong and how those who followed them ended up paying dearly (and made others pay) for the idiocy.

The capitalist leadership in America couldn’t foresee that by the end of the twentieth century, communism would collapse in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe and would no longer be a viable opponent to America’s global domination; even China and Vietnam would abandon strictly communist principles and liberalize their economies in order to participate in the global market (while protecting themselves from exploitation by the West). For most of the world, economic growth and material wealth had become the goals of human existence, and capitalism was the main, if not the only, game.

The Commies joined the Nazis and Japs in history’s dustbin of bogeymen. But nations need such bogeymen to keep its citizenry ready to kill. In the new millennium, America has identified a new one: the Islamic terrorist.

After traveling around Japan, Europe, and America, I felt detached from Hawai‘i. I had lost touch with my high school and college friends. I enrolled in a couple of science and math classes, then dropped them. While I had earned an A in calculus two years earlier, I could no longer remember how to solve math problems and wasn’t motivated to learn again; organic chemistry was simply impenetrable. I decided to major in English because I was reading a lot – a great activity for the solitary person I had become. After completing a bachelor’s degree in English, I went off to Seattle for graduate school at the

University of Washington.

That first semester was difficult. Seattle's cold, rainy winter afternoons depressed me. On some days, as the evening sky grew dark at three p.m., I sat immobilized in a rocking chair, daydreaming about the brighter days and the sparkling blue ocean of Hawai'i.

I met a group of students from Hawai'i who were involved in an Asian American literature movement. Many of the writers in this movement were living in Seattle and the northwest or came up from San Francisco and Los Angeles to do readings or produce and direct plays. Writers such as Frank Chin, Lawson Inada, Shawn Wong, Garrett Hongo, and Wakako Yamauchi were creating a literature based on the experiences and history of Asian settlers in America. They had also discovered out-of-print literary works by an earlier generations of Asian Americans writers (Carlos Bulosan, John Okada, Toshio Mori, Hisaye Yamamoto, Louis Chu, etc.) and re-printed them in order to create an Asian American literary canon that could be taught in schools and universities. The most significant writers were featured in *AIIIEEEEE!: An Anthology of Asian-American Writers*, the title alluding ironically to the inarticulate cry of Jap soldiers dying in American comic books.

The activists saw literature as essential to developing an identity for Asian Americans, many of whom were confused or uncertain about who they were, not sure if they were Asian or American and unable to bridge the gap between the two labels. The activists were creating a third label, Asian Americans, by which they could hold onto their ancestral heritages while claiming America as their new homeland. Their works reminded me of the words in Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist*: "to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."

I knew little about Asian American history on the continent, so the literature was new and interesting to me – stories about the Chinese workers in the nineteenth century who built the transcontinental railroad and then were driven out of towns all over the West and deported back to China or segregated in densely populated urban quarters called Chinatowns; about the Japanese who helped develop the agricultural industry in California and then were deprived of homes and farms and forced into internment camps during World War II; about the exploitation of Filipino immigrants in America's fields and factories. I read this literature outside of the graduate English curriculum at UW, since the department did not offer any courses in this newly forming literary tradition.

Asian Americans share with other non-white American minorities a history of discrimination, harassment, and oppression by racist white people. Laws had forbidden Asian immigrants from owning land, from becoming citizens, from marrying whites. Asian Americans also share with other minorities an ongoing struggle for equal opportunity against those who believe that America is a white country and that everyone not white is alien.

It was different in Hawai'i where those of Japanese ancestry had, by my

parents' generation, acquired economic and political power and influence in the community and a general equality with whites. The Jepanis (locals of Japanese ancestry) were the largest ethnic group while I was growing up (about one-third of a multiethnic population) and dominated the state government and the public education system. The governor and first lady of Hawai'i and the majority of legislators were Jepani, as were the superintendent of the public schools and the majority of teachers. While the schools and universities were not teaching literary works by local writers, the history of Jepanis in Hawai'i was widely known – the plantation experience, the labor unions, and the struggle for equality. The heroics of Nisei soldiers in World War II was also well known, as was their post-war rise into the middle class: the survivors returned after the war to attend college, find jobs, rise to political power, and become middle class. Although this success story was not true for everyone, many Jepanis, at least in socio-economic terms, had lived the American success story and achieved the American Dream.

In Seattle and on the West Coast, Japanese Americans were telling a different story, not of success, but of victimization. The World War II internment of immigrants barred from citizenship and their American children was the central symbol of this victimization. I could see the effects of racism on the Japanese Americans (and other Asian Americans) in Seattle: they seemed less outgoing, less confident, and less trustful of other people, including themselves, than people of Asian ancestry in Hawai'i.

While I understood their anger and outrage and was glad when later, those who were interned received a presidential apology and a symbolic reparation payment (hardly compensatory for the losses), I didn't identify with the mainland Asian Americans because I didn't feel victimized. While I experienced some prejudice in Hawai'i while growing up, it didn't make life oppressive and I didn't feel disadvantaged; if anything, I felt privileged.

I joined some Asian American friends from Seattle on a pilgrimage to a former temporary internment camp at a country fair ground; the theme of the pilgrimage was "Never Again." A white reporter I met at the fair ground asked for my family's internment story.

Both of my grandfathers were arrested at the start of the war. My grandfather Kawaharada on Maui was held at a jail in Wailuku, then released; but for the rest of the war he had to report periodically to a plantation boss. He was watched because he had served as a liaison between Japanese workers and the Japanese consulate before the war. (Unlike many of the immigrants, he could read and write; the literacy rate in turn-of-the-century Japan was about forty percent.) He was also active in supporting the Japanese language school in Hāmākua-poko, at a time when the territorial government was trying to shut down language schools in order to Americanize the Nisei. The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court eventually ruled, and the Supreme Court concurred, that the

territory's efforts to close the schools were unconstitutional and admonished the Americanizers: "You cannot make good citizens by oppression or by a denial of constitutional rights."

At the start of the war, my grandfather Kuwahara from Hilo was also arrested. He was sent to an internment camp in Louisiana, then Montana, for the duration of the war. These camps were for suspected agents of the Japanese government.

Grandfather Kuwahara was a merchant in Hilo. He had organized the Hawai'i Grocer's Association, a group of issei store owners who banded together to buy in bulk so they could compete with larger stores supplied by the haole-owned Amfac. Grandfather owned a couple of stores in Hilo and a warehouse on the waterfront. He brought in western groceries and dry goods from Honolulu and the West Coast, and Japanese goods (dishes, tea kettles, wooden slippers, etc.) from Japan. His store took orders from and delivered goods to the plantation communities along the Hāmākua coast, up to Honoka'a. When Japanese ships came to Hilo, he hosted parties for their captains, officers, and sailors.

When I asked my mother how her father got the money to open his business, she said she didn't know, that for as long as she could remember, he had the business. I thought perhaps he got the money through tanomoshi, a method of raising capital in an economy where immigrants were not able to get loans from haole-owned banks. The immigrants pooled their money, then loaned the fund to a member of the pool, with interest.

My mother asked one of my father's fishing buddies, who once worked as an accountant for my grandfather, how my grandfather got started. He told her my grandfather had money because he was a spy for the Japanese government and that the person who was supposedly my grandfather's brother was another agent whose job was to watch him.

My mother denies the allegation, and I agree with her, if what my father's buddy meant was that grandfather was spying on the U.S. military. There was no U.S. military presence in Hilo. My guess is that he meant my grandfather worked for the Japanese government, reporting on the behavior and treatment of the Japanese community in and around Hilo. The Japanese government was very paternalistic: it controlled emigration from Japan tightly and was concerned about how its citizens behaved in other countries as well as how foreign governments and people treated the immigrants.

Whether grandfather was a spy or not, it was clear to me that if Japan had won the war, he would have collaborated with the Japanese. He was an alien banned by law from becoming a naturalized American citizen or from owning land in America. (His store, purchased from a Potagee family, was on land leased from a part-Hawaiian family.) He was loyal to Japan and would have done well under a Japanese takeover of the islands.

My mother tells me that unlike the nisei soldiers who joined the army and fought for America wholeheartedly, she was ambivalent about the war because

of the strong influence of her father, and even felt happy when she heard news of Japanese victories. So in her family there was no protest over her father's internment; he accepted his incarceration without any bitterness. Two of his sons were drafted into the U.S. army. Muin Ozaki, a Hilo newspaper writer, wrote a poem expressing the irony of fathers and sons being citizens of two different countries at war:

> Sailing on the same ship
> The son, a U.S. soldier
> His father,
> A prisoner of war.
>
> (*Poets Behind Barbed Wire*, ed. Jiro and Kay Nakano)

My uncle told me the poem was about his father and him: as a soldier, he was sent to Honolulu on the same ship as my grandfather, who was in transit to internment on the mainland.

While my grandfather was interned, a nisei employee embezzled money from his business. After the war, the tsunami of 1946 leveled the Hilo waterfront where grandfather's main store and warehouse was located. In a family photo of the devastation, only the store front is standing, surrounded by piles of broken boards and other debris. With these business losses, my grandfather could no longer support his wife and six children, so he eventually returned to Hiroshima to run a hotel. He came back to Hawai‘i because of an illness and died in Hilo in 1962.

The Asian American literature I read in Seattle was important to my understanding of America, but taught me little about my own experiences or my home or family in Hawai‘i. Only when I read Milton Murayama's novella *All I Asking for Is My Body* did I recognize in a literary work places and experiences that were familiar to me. The plantation towns and fields of Maui in the 1930s that Murayama describes were still the features of the island in the 1950s and 60s when we visited my grandmother. The characters in the novella speak in a language and do and say things I recognized from my small-kid time on Kea‘ahala Road. The novella opened my mind to the possibility of writing about those experiences one day. (Murayama compromised somewhat on the pidgin to make it more understandable to American readers: he used "by-'n'-by" instead of "bumbye"; and "been" instead of "wen'" – a past tense marker in pidgin from the past tense of "go." He told me he couldn't figure out why pidgin speakers used what he thought was the conjunction "when" as a verb.)

Murayama grew up in a plantation community in Lāhaina, Maui. He depicts the plantation as a pyramid of shit, with the haoles on top and the workers stratified by ethnicity below:

> Shit too was organized according to the plantation pyramid. Mr. Nelson was top shit on the highest slope, then there were the Portuguese, Spanish, and nisei lunas with their indoor toilets which flushed into the same ditches, then Japanese Camp and Filipino Camp.

The plot is driven by a conflict between a father and two sons over whether the sons should remain loyal to the family and Japanese tradition, or become free individuals like other Americans. Remaining loyal to the family meant staying on the plantation to work to pay off the family debt, though the wages were too low to allow this to happen. Kiyoshi and Tosh, the two sons, try gambling and boxing to get money and escape from the plantation. Then, at the outbreak of World War II, Kiyoshi joins the army:

> Everybody in Kahana was dying to get out of this icky shit-hole, and here was his chance delivered on a silver platter. Besides, once you fought, you earned the right to complain and participate, you earned a right to a future.

During a dice game with other nisei volunteers, Kiyoshi decides to cheat to get the money to pay off the family debt; by ripping off his community, he can free himself. Kiyoshi is not interested in changing the plantation society for the betterment of all, only in escaping from it himself. His self-justification is echoed in the rationalizations of greedy politicians, businessmen, and criminals of all ethnicities today:

> And it wasn't really cheating, not like marked cards or loaded dice anyway. Besides, if I didn't take their money, another padroller would've. It was their fault if they couldn't spot it. In gambling it was dog eat dog, every dog was after something for nothing, you never gave a dog an even break.

Kiyoshi admits he was wrong and feels bad about it – but not bad enough to give any of the money back.

When I met Murayama in San Francisco in the late 1980s, he seemed ambivalent about growing up in Hawai‘i. World War II provided him with an escape from the plantation, as it did for his character Kiyoshi: after training at a Military Intelligence Language School, he served as an interpreter in India and China. After the war, he graduated from the University of Hawai‘i, then got an M.A. in Japanese and Chinese from Columbia University in New York.

At his house overlooking the city lights of San Francisco, where he had retired from the postal service, over a dinner of grunions that his wife from Oregon had caught and deep-fried, Murayama told me the publication history of his classic: he self-published the book in 1959 because it was rejected by the publishers of New York. He sold about 10,000 copies – a strong run for a

small press publication.

Three decades after its original publication, in 1988, the University of Hawai‘i Press reprinted Murayama’s classic, and later published a prequel and a sequel. By the 80s, America’s publishing houses were eager to market works by Asian American writers. The Asian American literature movement and best-selling writers like Maxine Hong Kingston had created a viable and growing market for such works.

Murayama and the Asian American writers in Seattle stimulated my high school aspiration of becoming a writer. They also gave me insights into the politics of writing, publication, and education. When the Asian American literary movement started, Asian American writers couldn’t find publishers, so the literary activists established small presses and published the books themselves. They also recognized the need to write literary criticism and analysis to establish the merits of the works and undermine claims by the white literary establishment that works by Asian American writers couldn’t be taught in schools and universities because they lacked literary qualities and intellectual significance. The activists aimed to establish an Asian American literary canon and make it a part of school and university curricula, so that the works could be studied by future generations, in perpetuity. This, in turn, would create an audience and a market for their books, making it possible for the writers to earn a living (or at least some money) for their literary production.

I began to see “Literature” as they did: a multi-faceted, collaborative effort, which included writers, editors, publishers, critics, educators, students, and the public.

In a seminar on Shakespeare at UW, I met Beth, a bright young Jepani who had graduated from McKinley High School in Honolulu. As a high school student, Beth took courses at the University of Hawai‘i under the early admissions program, then went off to the University of Chicago after graduation.

We had dinner at a restaurant on the Avenue one night, then went back to her room to drink tea on her bedroom floor. Her long black hair, braided and coiled over her shoulder, reminded me of a sleeping cat. As I was leaving, it was cold and drizzling outside, so she offered me a sweater her brother had left with her. I declined because I don’t like to wear the clothing of a stranger. Beth and I continued to hang out together during my year in Seattle.

I was surprised when she told me she didn’t like Hawai‘i and didn’t want to live here. I always assumed that people who grew up in Hawai‘i loved Hawai‘i and felt it was home. She said Hawai‘i was too humid, and she didn’t like the family pressures – her relatives were always inquiring about her life with an air of disapproval because she hadn’t graduated with an advanced degree yet, hadn’t become a successful professional, hadn’t met a nice Jepani or haole boy

to marry, didn't have any children. I understood why she felt confined by such a narrow view of what would make her life meaningful or praiseworthy. What she told me about her family I recognized in my own and other families, which had similar narrow middle-class beliefs about what constitutes a good life; they were always comparing each other's children and gossiping, approvingly or disapprovingly, about what each child was doing. I thought the norms of middle-class Jepanis were okay for the many who felt comfortable with them, but laughable when the family tried to apply those norms to me or to others who didn't feel that way.

Beth didn't enjoy her years at McKinley High School. She remembered physical education class as being particularly humiliating. ("I walked around the track while everyone else ran.") Recalling my days at Castle High School, I understood why she felt out of place: there was a strong physical culture in public schools – not just good looks and athletic ability were highly regarded, but also the ability to settle a dispute by punching someone out. Intellectuals and intellectual activities were recognized and honored to some extent, but the majority of students were not too enthusiastic about reading Shakespeare.

Going to college on the mainland was Beth's Great Escape from what she perceived as the provincialism of Hawai'i. But at the University of Chicago, she discovered that she was an outsider among the haoles of the Midwest as well; she ended up hitchhiking across Canada and settling in Seattle, which had a large Asian American population.

One day Beth told me that she was bothered by the line "Hakagawa … bowing among the Titians," in T.S. Eliot's poem "Gerontian." I interpreted the line to be an expression of the poem's persona, a decrepit, alienated white guy vexed and befuddled by history – the twentieth century dispersion of peoples across national boundaries and the seemingly chaotic ethnic and cultural dislocations and mixing that resulted. Beth took the line personally, as a snide reference to Japanese like herself and me studying European art and literature. Eliot, who harbored anti-Semitic sentiments, came to hold to the ideal of "the blood kinship of the same people living in the same place." His move from America to England in 1914 was an excellent choice for someone who felt most comfortable living among his own kind. (He would probably feel less at home in the multiethnic England of today.) But could someone like Eliot who once studied Buddhism at Harvard have come to believe that people should limit themselves to studying only artists and writers of their own blood? Whatever the case, ironically, Eliot's American ancestors had butt their faces into Japan uninvited, when the Japanese wanted nothing to do with the rest of the world; Commodore Perry's armed intrusion in 1853 opened the door to Lafcadio Hearn's bowing among the Hiroshiges.

That semester I completed my paper for our Shakespeare seminar; Beth had writer's block and couldn't finish hers. She told me she was going to take an incomplete. I associated her incomplete with her bone-thin fingers, which reminded me of sparrow's feet. One wintry night, mist blowing against our

faces and drizzly skies overhead, we walked to a party being given by students and transplants from Hawai‘i. Beth sighed and made a comment about the evil fate of the stars. I pushed my dreams of sunny beaches deeper into my warm overcoat pockets and said nothing.

After a year in Seattle, I was homesick and returned to Hawai‘i that summer to finish the last requirement for my master’s degree – a research paper on the British poet Alexander Pope. (I liked his witty verses.) To earn some money while I wrote, I took a federally funded job as a reading tutor at ‘Ilima Intermediate School in ‘Ewa Beach.

Remedial reading class was where the English teachers at the school sent the students they couldn’t or didn’t want to teach – the learning disabled, the unmotivated, the uninterested, the emotionally troubled. On the first day of class, I asked the kids to write about a significant experience in their lives and how it affected them, so I could get a sense of who they were. One huge haole kid from a military family wrote: “I went to a picnic. A guy pulled out a knife, he stabbed his friend. I felt weird.” He sketched a picture of a big guy stabbing a little guy at a picnic table, with blood squirting out of the wound. Others wrote less or not at all. Alan, a tiny Filipino boy, wasn’t interested. He sat down by himself at a table near the door and stared at the wall for the whole period – and the whole semester. He never said a word or responded to any of my questions or comments.

More typically, the kids liked to talk, but not write. A couple of the boys were just cruising through school. They told their English teacher they wanted to be in the remedial class, so they wouldn’t have to do homework; so she sent them to my class. I assigned them to read whatever I could find in the classroom – mainly books written for black inner-city kids. The two boys read the material quickly, then spent the rest of the class talking story with me.

Some of the other kids were hyperactive: they came into the classroom and started pushing and punching each other, knocking over chairs, throwing pencils and papers.

The boys (and they were mostly boys), with their testosterone levels increasing daily, wanted to talk about sex. Aaron, a handsome Filipino kid, greeted me every day with, “So what, Ka-harada, you poke squid last night? How was it?” Little Bobby, a part-Hawaiian kid, brought a set of pornographic playing cards to show me. He said he borrowed them from his uncle.

One girl had a facial deformity, a missing cheekbone. Like Alan, she had little to say, though unlike him, she did the readings I assigned and read out loud when asked. Years later I read an article about how social rejection decreases one’s IQ and thought about her. She seemed not to lack intelligence, but was extremely shy and withdrawn.

One day I brought an Olomana tape, with the lyrics typed out, and played the songs for the kids so they could read the lyrics while listening to the songs.

A huge kid of Sāmoan-Hawaiian-Portuguese ancestry with the improbable name of Poyer fell in love with the songs, which express good feelings about growing up and living in Hawai‘i; he came back to the classroom after school and sat with his head down in front of the tape player and listened to the songs over and over again, until I told him I had to go home.

Joey, a good-natured Potagee boy who played on the junior varsity football team, could barely read. I offered to tutor him in reading at the ‘Ewa Beach Library on Saturdays; I was surprised when he agreed to come. On the first Saturday, I wondered if he would show up; he rode up on his bicycle, on time. We read Hawaiian legends for children – stories of Kamapua‘a, the pig god, and Puapualenalena, the supernatural dog. He liked the stories, but could hardly make out words. “So what is that …‘t-h-e’?” he would ask. Now that I think back on it, he was probably learning disabled in some way, but the school system did not have the capability at that time to diagnose or help him; it just labeled him remedial and allowed him to fall farther and farther back each year.

What strikes me about my first experience teaching in Hawai‘i was how little the public school system had to offer these struggling students. The reading material was written by non-locals about non-locals for non-locals. While such material might appeal to kids who were raised in families that encouraged reading to expand one’s horizon, it had little relationship to life in Hawai‘i or anything that students who did not have that kind of upbringing might be familiar with or could get excited about. And all this at an age when the students should be reading literature to develop a sense who they are. The kids who had lost interest in what the school fed them were mentally malnourished, brain-starved. (Even today, community discussions of improving literacy and student achievement focus primarily on more funding to raise reading test scores, not on what really matters: the content of education, designing and producing a curriculum to interest and inspire turned-off students to learn by expanding their capacity to think about themselves, their communities, and their future.)

The school hired me to work with these students – someone who knew nothing about teaching reading or developing or finding materials that might have captured the imaginations of these students and motivated them to read. The gap was huge between the British, American, and Asian American literature I studied in college and the world of these kids.

After receiving my master’s degree at the end of the semester, I was hired by the University of Hawai‘i to teach a course in writing at a military base. I found teaching college writing interesting and decided that I would go back to Seattle to work for a doctorate in English. But I had a sense that if I were to pursue a career in teaching in Hawai‘i one day, I would want to teach some stories rooted in Hawai‘i and in the ancestral heritages of the community.

When I got back to the University of Washington, I was offered a teaching assistantship that paid my living expenses and allowed me to pay resident

tuition. I volunteered to teach in a special program for minority students of Asian ancestry, mainly Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese. The program featured readings in Asian American, African American, and Native American literature. Outside of teaching and taking classes, I pretty much hung out alone and read. I couldn't relate to the English graduate students, mainly white, who were training to join a guild for researching and writing about British and Anglo-American writers.

Reading was the perfect activity for me; I didn't have to talk to anyone. I read through most of the major works of British and American literature and started on the minor works in preparation for exams. I began to lose interest. What motivated me to read these books in the first place was curiosity about how people of far-away places and far-off times thought and felt about their lives and communities. But for now, I decided, I knew enough about how British and American people think and live. After three years, I returned to Hawai'i without starting on my dissertation. I was uncertain about a topic, but I was certain I didn't want to spend my life writing about Shakespeare or Alexander Pope.

Local Geography

Hoʻi hou ka iʻa i ke ʻehu kai.
The fish returns to the foamy sea.

—Proverb 1027, *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau*

Seattle was a very attractive and livable city in the 1970s, with evergreen forests, gardens, lakes, a waterfront, a lively cultural scene, and a variety of good restaurants. But the longer I lived there, the more I longed to hear local voices and Hawaiian music and to read stories about home. I spent free afternoons listening to Sunday Manoa and Gabby Pahinui tapes. I went looking for books on Hawaiʻi in Suzzallo Library and found Malo's *Hawaiian Antiquities*; I started reading it while sitting on the floor beneath the shelf where I found it. It opened up a cultural landscape that was terra incognita to me. Other books, like the novels of Bahian Jorge Amado, I read because they reminded me somewhat of home.

There was very little in libraries and bookstores by writers from Hawaiʻi and I hadn't encountered many such works during my education in Hawaiʻi. I thought perhaps these stories were yet to be written. I began working on a couple of children stories with pidgin dialogue and planned to find a publisher for them when I got back to the islands. (One of the stories was later published.)

Home for the summer in 1978, I went to a conference called "Talk Story" at the Mid-Pacific Institute in Honolulu. Organized by Steve Sumida, Arnold Hiura, and Marie Hara, it was a celebration of local literature; writers read and presented their poetry, songs, fiction, drama, and scholarly papers. After the conference, Sumida and Hiura (who were University of Washington graduates) published an annotated bibliography of Hawaiʻi's Asian American writings, which went back decades. All this local literary activity was a revelation to me: not only had many stories of Hawaiʻi been written, but writers were producing more.

When I moved back to Hawaiʻi in 1979, I found a job teaching English at Kapiʻolani Community College and joined a writer's group associated with Bamboo Ridge Press. The press was founded in 1978 by playwright and fiction-writer Darrell Lum and poet Eric Chock. What this group was doing was important work, like what Asian American writers were doing in Seattle – creating literature from their own experiences and histories, publishing it, writing criticism, and advocating the teaching of local literature in the classroom. This literature began to establish and validate local lives and

identities.

Without such validation, some of my friends felt a desire to change who they were: one of my high school friends, who went to college in Connecticut and lived in a house with white roommates, told me he would stand in front of the mirror some mornings wishing he could wash off his Japanese face! Another friend, an aspiring actress of Chinese ancestry, had her eyelids operated on to make her eyes look rounder, more white, hoping to get more theater roles. Unfortunately, the surgery by a young and inexperienced doctor was only partially successful; one eyelid drooped, creating a weird effect of two different-sized eyes. She never made it as a professional actress. (This operation to enlarge the appearance of the eyes is the most popular kind of cosmetic surgery among Asian and Asian American women, even more popular than breast enlargement. Before the advent of cosmetic surgery, all one could do to become more white was to adopt white ways of talking, thinking, and behaving or to marry a white in hopes that one's children would look at least half white.)

Literature by writers with island roots would allow locals to develop a sense of identity that reflected our island heritages. One writer who was contributing to such a literature was Rodney Morales, who graduated in 1970 from Farrington High School, a public school serving the sprawling multiethnic industrial and working class district of Kalihi in west Honolulu. In his fiction, Morales explores young people coming of age and discovering identities. His collection *The Speed of Darkness*, published in Bamboo Ridge Press in 1988, is the best short fiction of our generation: stories about people of various ancestries (Japanese, Hawaiian, Puerto Rican, Filipino, mixed) overcoming fears, going through walls and barriers that either divide or imprison us. Those trapped inside need to get out, those on the outside need to get in, to find wholeness in family, community, friendships, and love. A later short story, "When the Shark Bites" (which Morales eventually expanded into a novel of the same name) captures the essence of an island boyhood – the first steps we take from the safety of land into the wildness of the sea.

When I joined Bamboo Ridge in 1984, it was publishing mainly the literature of the middle class of Asian ancestry in Hawai‘i, a reflection of the founders' own backgrounds. Their stories and poems told local versions of the American Dream. The immigrants arrive in America and experience hostility and discrimination and suffer hardships, but work hard for one or two generations, prove that they are Americans (e.g. by fighting for America in a war), and sacrifice for their children and send them to college. The children grow up, get educated, fall in love, get married and have their own children, succeed in some career or business, buy a house, send their children to college, and retire with grandchildren, who feel good about holding onto (or bad about not holding onto) some aspect of their Asian heritage (e.g., popping firecrackers on New Year's Eve, cooking gau or pounding mochi, wearing a kimono, visiting family graves, going to O-bon dances).

What set Morales apart from other Bamboo Ridge writers (aside from his Puerto Rican rather than Asian ancestry) was that his works reveal more going on in Hawai‘i than the pursuit of the American Dream. In the 1970s, kānaka maoli were revitalizing their traditional culture and becoming a political force in the islands. Morales was a supporter and advocate of what was called the Hawaiian Renaissance. In 1984, he edited an anthology titled *Ho‘i Ho‘i Hou: A Tribute to George Helm and Kimo Mitchell.* It was not the usual collection of middle-class poems and stories submitted to Bamboo Ridge. It contained multi-generational, multi-genre writings by kānaka maoli with anti-colonial and anti-capitalist consciousness, the kind of works not often represented in Bamboo Ridge. (The founding editors usually dismissed such writings as "political rhetoric," not "literature.")

Ho‘i Ho‘i Hou features Morales' biographies of activists George Helm and Kimo Mitchell, who disappeared at sea off Kaho‘olawe during protests against the U.S. military's use of the uninhabited island for naval and air target practice. In the mid-1970s, this island became a focal point of kānaka maoli resistance to American colonialism. At the start of World War II, the U.S. government had leased the island from the state and continued to use it for military exercises after the war.

Helm, Mitchell, and the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO) wanted the island returned to kānaka maoli for protection and care, as a place to revive and practice the traditional Hawaiian culture; the bombing was desecrating sacred sites, killing the ‘āina. One test explosion was so powerful that it cracked the cap rock of the island, rendering some of its limited supply of life-giving groundwater brackish.

In January 1977, two PKO members, Richard Sawyer and Walter Ritte, Jr., occupied the island to protest the bombing. By early March, the two protesters still hadn't been found by military search parties. Alarmed by a dream, Helm worried that something might have happened to his two friends. On March 5, Helm, Kimo Mitchell, and Billy Mitchell were dropped off by boat on Kaho‘olawe to find Sawyer and Ritte. Helm and the Mitchells didn't know that their two friends, after thirty-five days on the island, had turned themselves in that morning in order to save some baby goats they had taken under their care. Unable to find the two, the three men went to meet the pick-up boat. When it didn't arrive on schedule, they decided to paddle back to Maui on two surfboards. Gale force winds were blowing, and the ‘Alalākeiki channel was rough. According to Billy Mitchell, the lone survivor, George and Kimo were last seen on their surfboards near Molokini island, between Kaho‘olawe and Mākena. (The name of the channel, ‘Alalākeiki – "crying child," alludes to a child heard crying in the wind; stories spread through the community about what really happened to George and Kimo.)

The disappearance of the two men was a heart-wrenching blow to the PKO, but inspired by the dedication and sacrifice of Helm and Mitchell, the protests continued to grow stronger, more determined, more organized, and

more savvy in building a consensus of public opinion against the military's use of the island. When the movement started, it was criticized by many as too radical; but by the mid-1980s, the majority of the community, from politicians to schoolchildren, saw the protests as pono, or just.

In 1990, President Bush issued an executive order ending the military's use of Kahoʻolawe as a bombing and target range. In 1995, the U.S. Navy agreed to return the island to the state, which then designated it as a site for native cultural practices and education. In 2004, after a five-year, $400 million clean-up to make the island safe for peaceful activities, the island was officially returned to the state for transfer to a yet-to-be-determined sovereign Hawaiian entity. So much ordnance was fired at or dropped on the ʻāina that much still remains, and perhaps will always remain, embedded in its body.

When I became managing editor of Bamboo Ridge in 1984, I wanted to continue Morales' good work of expanding the range of what Bamboo Ridge was publishing as "the literature of Hawaiʻi." Poet and activist Dana Naone Hall proposed an anthology she eventually titled *Mālama: Hawaiian Land and Sea*. Hall was one of the leaders of the Hui Alanui o Mākena, a group opposing a Japanese developer's plan to limit public access to the beach around a luxury hotel and golf course to be built in Mākena, Maui.

"Alanui o Mākena" refers to the Mākena portion of an ancient stone-paved road built by Piʻilani around the island. The road symbolized the traditional access from land to sea, to allow for the gathering of plants and animals under the supervision of a konohiki. The hui's protest highlighted contrasting values: for kānaka maoli, access means life and the perpetuation of traditions; limiting access favors the capitalist idea of individual property rights, exclusive use of land, and privacy for people rich enough to pay for it. Landowners in Hawaiʻi are required to provide "reasonable" public access to all the beaches and coastlines of Hawaiʻi, which belong to the public up to the high water mark; and the state constitution recognizes the traditional gathering rights of kānaka maoli. Still, the public has had to remain vigilant in maintaining its right to access the shoreline, because some landowners are not reasonable.)

In support of this struggle to protect access and tradition, Hall gathered works by writers expressing mālama (caring) for the land, sea, people, and indigenous culture of Hawaiʻi. In her introduction, Dana quotes a young Hawaiian at a hearing: "I have been here for 2,000 years"; and she adds, "It is that sense of belonging to the place since the landing of the first canoes, that we honor in this issue." Bamboo Ridge published her anthology in 1985.

A year earlier, Esther "Kiki" Mookini, who taught with me at Kapiʻolani Community College, submitted to Bamboo Ridge her translation of a series of articles about four-footed animals, published in 1834 in *Ka Lama Hawaiʻi*, the first Hawaiian language newspaper. The articles were loose translations

of a New England natural history text and were illustrated with original wood-block prints – a zoo in print.

Kiki was from Pāʻia, Maui, near Kuiaha, where my father grew up. Of Japanese ancestry, she married a Hawaiian educator, studied Hawaiian language at the University of Hawaiʻi, and became a teacher. Her great love was translating Hawaiian texts into English, to make them available to an English-reading audience. In her generation and mine, not many could read Hawaiian. The idea of publishing the Hawaiian portion of the text struck me as vital. I had heard Hawaiian spoken and sung all my life, but never studied it formally; it wasn't offered at the public schools I attended, nor was it a language that colleges would accept as fulfilling their language requirement. As we worked on editing her translation, Kiki introduced me to the grammar and vocabulary of Hawaiian and inspired me to learn to read it. Bamboo Ridge published *O Nā Holoholona o Waewae eha* ("The Four-footed Animals") in 1985.

O Nā Holoholona was followed by *Kauaʻi Tales*, a collection of Hawaiian legends by Frederick B. Wichman, who was a descendant of William Hyde Rice, the author of *Hawaiian Legends* published by the Bishop Museum Press in 1923. Western editors and storytellers had simplified traditional stories and retold them for children, stripped of most of their figurative language, allusions, and cultural, geographical, and genealogical details – the very essence of the stories. During my school years, I had assumed that the stories were only for children. Reading Wichman's renditions changed my opinion: he explained the connections of the stories to places and provided information about cultural traditions and allusions; I was motivated to read more.

As I began to research Hawaiian literature, another opportunity took me away on a two-year leave of absence from Kapiʻolani to teach Asian American and multicultural literature at UC Berkeley. This opportunity came through Genny Lim, a Chinese American poet, playwright, and performance artist from San Francisco's Chinatown, who came to Hawaiʻi to do a reading in 1985. Genny taught a play-writing class at Berkeley (her play *Paper Angels* was produced for television by PBS in 1984); on her recommendation, the director of Asian American Studies offered me a lectureship in writing and literature. I was excited by the opportunity to teach at this storied campus, fifteen years after I had wandered there for a day, a lost soul, wondering where to go to school, what to major in, who I really was.

At Berkeley students and faculty were debating the pros and cons of what became known as the American Cultures Requirement. Proponents of this requirement believed that undergraduates at Berkeley should be required to take at least one multicultural studies course that compared the histories, cultures, and experiences of at least three of the five main ethnic American groups in California: African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans,

Chicano/Latino Americans, and European Americans.

This initiative was part of a decades-long struggle over the cultural curriculum at the university. In the late 60s, students at Berkeley protested for the right of all Americans to study the American experience from the points of view of their communities and ancestors. The university administration and many of the faculty opposed offering such non-traditional studies, so the student proponents organized rallies and strikes. The administration and state under Governor Ronald Reagan tried to suppress the student protests with suspensions, arrests, Mace, tear gas, and the National Guard.

In the end, the students and their faculty and community supporters won – the Department of Ethnic Studies was established at Berkeley in 1969; initially it included Afro-American, Asian American, Native American, and Chicano Studies. African American Studies eventually became a separate department, but a multiethnic coalition has continued to oppose racist and exclusionary policies and practices in American education and society, including strong support from progressive European American students, faculty, and community activists.

By the 1980s, courses in ethnic studies and multiculturalism were firmly established at Berkeley. The American Cultures Requirement would take multicultural education another step forward: instead of just offering courses and allowing students to choose to study their own heritages, all students of single ethnic groups on their way to a bachelor's degree would have to acquire some knowledge of the heritages of at least two other ethnic groups. Proponents argued that this requirement would benefit all students as well as the community. It would increase understanding of the multicultural character of the state and nation, encourage mutual respect among the diverse ethnic groups, and reduce social tensions and conflicts, so that business could prosper, and social life and cultural activities could flourish in a harmonious and inclusive environment.

The requirement was designed to address the educational needs of an increasingly multicultural state. Because of immigration from Mexico, Asia, Latin America, and other places, along with robust population growth among non-European groups and miscegenation, by the end of the twentieth century the majority of Californians would trace ancestries to places other than Europe. And given national trends of immigration and population growth, California represents the future of America: by 2060, European Americans will no longer form a national majority.

One of the leaders of multicultural education at Berkeley was historian Ron Takaki. Takaki's grandfather arrived in Hawai'i in 1886 to work on a sugar plantation. Three generations later, Takaki graduated from 'Iolani High School and went to college at Wooster, then Berkeley, where he earned a Ph.D. in history. Hired at UCLA, he developed a course called Racial Inequality in America. After five years of teaching, he was denied tenure. "I was fired for pushing the idea of Ethnic Studies," Takaki explains. Berkeley hired him with

tenure to teach Comparative Ethnic Studies.

Takaki's books on multicultural America and Hawai'i weave together the stories of the various ethnic groups that built America. "We need to understand our diversity from a pluralistic perspective," Takaki argues. "We need a comparative approach to America's racial and ethnic diversity, and we need to understand the ways the paths of different groups have crisscrossed each other." I could see how Takaki's ideas about multiculturalism were reflected in the courses in the Asian American Studies curriculum. The two-semester Reading and Composition sequence I was assigned to teach covered Asian American literature in the first semester and multicultural literature (Asian American, African American, Native American, and Chicano literatures) in the second.

I became interested in Native American writers like Leslie Marmon Silko who offered a critique of capitalism and an alternative world view. I had grown skeptical of the capitalist enterprise; over the decades, I witnessed Honolulu transformed from a small town in a rural state into an overpopulated, hyperactive, competitive, materialistic, greedy, wasteful American city, driven by an influx of money and tourists from America and Japan. The discussions around town are dominated by the capitalist agenda: how to attract more tourists and make more money; how to build more houses, shopping centers, and resorts; how to move more people around already congested streets; how to attract more stores to sell more goods; how to pack the old goods we throw away into landfills already filled to capacity; how to make freshwater from saltwater once freshwater resources are taxed to their limits, or polluted.

Disappointingly crass is the media obsession with money: whenever a large group of visitors arrives in the islands, the news stories are not about their hopes and dreams or what they came to see or do, but about how much money each group brings in. When a regional youth soccer tournament was held here recently, reporters went around asking the kids and their parents not about their training, strategies, or inspirations, but about how much money they planned to spend and where and what they planned to buy. The reports concluded gleefully that the tournament was worth millions to the state economy.

Silko, of Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico, presents a very different view of life, one based not on money or human ownership and domination of the earth, but on the interdependency of all living things and on living healthily, in balance with nature. In Pueblo tradition, the land doesn't belong to the people; the people belong to and are dependent on the land for their well-being. (Compare the American folk song "This land is your land, this land is my land.") The plants and animals aren't resources created for human use, as capitalism and Christianity teach; they are siblings, here to help us survive:

The human beings could not have emerged without the aid of antelope

> and badger. The human beings depended on the aid and charity of the animals. Only through interdependence could the human beings survive. Life on the high arid plateau became viable when the human beings were able to imagine themselves as sisters and brothers to the badger, antelope, clay, yucca, and sun. ("Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination")

In *Storyteller*, Silko explains the spiritual relationship between the deer and the Laguna people:

> In the fall, the Laguna hunters go to the hills and mountains around Laguna Pueblo to bring back the deer. The people think of the deer as coming to give themselves to the hunters so that the people will have meat through the winter. Late in the winter the Deer Dance is performed to honor and pay thanks to the deer spirits who've come home with the hunters that year. Only when this has been properly done will the spirits be able to return to the mountain and be reborn into more deer who will, remembering the reverence and appreciation of the people, once more come home with the hunters.

One winter, on the day after Christmas, Genny and I visited Acoma Pueblo, near Silko's Laguna home, and witnessed a deer dance. Four dancers, wearing antlers and evergreen branches on their heads, appeared from one of the houses to the shaking of rattles and bells. They walked with a cane in each hand, simulating suggestively the four-legged gait of the deer. One of the dancers was a young boy, apparently chosen to learn and pass on the tradition.

The dancers crossed a plaza, then entered the Franciscan church of San Estevan, built in 1629; the dance continued inside. Christianity has been absorbed into the traditional Acoma culture – the sacrifice of the deer and the sacrifice of Christ blended together.

The world we live in is the words we use.

—Wittgenstein

When I returned to Hawai'i in 1988, I had a clearer sense of how multiculturalism was changing American culture: no longer would it acceptable to teach exclusively the literature of European Americans in schools and universities serving communities where the majority of people were of non-European ancestry. I could see how this multiculturalism could be applied in Hawai'i, with a literary canon that would include native and local literatures. Introducing this multiethnic literature into the curriculum would result in a more inclusive, democratic sense of community among the students.

I was already familiar with local literature from my work with Bamboo Ridge; I needed to learn more about Hawaiian literature if I wanted to

introduce students to selected works in translation. By good fortune, Kiki Mookini asked me for help on her latest project: she was translating a traditional story with Sarah Nākoa, a native speaker of Hawaiian and retired professor of the language. The story, *Moolelo o Pakaa a me Kuapakaa*, had been published in 1902 by Moses K. Nakuina. (While numerous traditional stories were published in Hawaiian newspapers in serial form, only two were published as books: *Moolelo o Pakaa a me Kuapakaa* was one of them; half a century earlier, in 1854, S.N. Haleʻole published the other, *Lāʻieikawai*.)

Moolelo o Pakaa a me Kuapakaa was much more interesting than the natural history text Kiki and I had worked on in 1985, because as a literary text, the moʻolelo was full of allusions, metaphors, symbols, riddles, and proverbial sayings. The central character is Pākaʻa, the "backbone" attendant (kahu iwikuamoʻo) and navigator for Keawenuiaʻumi, a ruling chief of Hawaiʻi and a son of ʻUmi-a-Liloa, who established the line of chiefs that came down to Kamehameha. Through his mother, Pākaʻa was also a descendant of the wind goddess Laʻamaomao and possessed a gourd containing all the winds of Hawaiʻi, which he could call forth by chanting their names. Pākaʻa's position in the royal court was usurped by two evil pretenders and he fled into exile on Molokaʻi. Through his son, Kūapakaʻa, whom he taught to use the wind gourd and chants, Pākaʻa was able to kill the two usurpers and regain his position and lands. He returned to the royal court on Hawaiʻi to re-establish order and justice.

The text contains an extensive vocabulary of fish and plant names, wind names and place names describing the island world that I thought I knew, yet did not really know. The chants identify over thirty local winds of the island of Hawaiʻi, over forty-five winds of Oʻahu, over forty-five winds of Kauaʻi, over a hundred winds of Maui, Molokaʻi, and Lānaʻi. English offers only a general vocabulary to describe the winds of the islands ("trade wind," "sea breeze"); the Hawaiian language has names for specific kinds of local winds – winds that stir up dust or sea spray, lift kapa, swirl around or tear down houses, rustle flowers and leaves, shake off dew, play hide and seek, make the nose cold. There is a morning wind and an evening wind, a dry wind and a wind full of rain, an offshore wind scented with hala and an onshore wind scented with limu, a squally wind over the ocean and a squally wind that comes off the mountain.

Natives of the islands were so enamored of their local winds that they published articles in the Hawaiian newspapers naming the winds of their home districts and explaining the character of each. In the newspaper *Ke Au Okoa*, P.R. Holi of Halewela, Niʻihau, offers twelve winds of Niʻihau (July 24, 1865); S.W. Nailiili gives nine winds of Hilo (July 10, 1865); L.S. Kailiehu of Honokalani, Maui, shares eleven winds of Hāna (June 12, 1865). When Thomas Maunupau visited Kaupō, Maui, in 1922, he asked a local resident for the names of winds there and published a description of thirteen winds of the district.

The wind chant of Oʻahu in *Moolelo o Pakaa* names the land sections and winds of the Koʻolau coast where I grew up:

Kahuku ("The Jutting Out"): The northernmost point of Oʻahu. The wind of Kahuku is "Ahamanu," which might be ʻAhamanu, "Gathering of birds," perhaps a wind on which seabirds soar.

Hauʻula ("Red Hibiscus Tree"): The hau is a valuable plant whose bark can be used to make cordage and hula skirts; its wood was used for floats and fire-making, its flowers and sap for medicine. The wind of Hauʻula is a strong one – Lanakila, "Prevailing."

Punaluʻu ("Spring Dived For"): This place name perhaps refers to a spring in the ocean where freshwater was obtained by diving with gourds; such undersea springs are common in Hawaiʻi. Waters from reservoirs inside the mountains flow through underground lava tubes that emerge from the sea bottom. The UH Geology department, analyzing satellite imagery, once reported their "discovery" of undersea sources of water along the Kona Coast of the Big Island, though the location of these springs have been known since ancient times. The wind of Punaluʻu is Moaʻe, a strong, but pleasant wind; the trade wind.

Kahana ("Cutting," or perhaps "The Bay"): The second largest bay on the coast after Kāneʻohe Bay. The ʻĀhiu ("Wild, Untamed") blows at Kahana.

Kaʻaʻawa (Ka aʻawa, "The Wrasse" or "Hogfish", a fish common in coral reefs; or Kaʻa awa, "Turning Passage"): "Turning Passage" could be a reference to the channel through the reef at the mouth of Kaʻaʻawa stream. Holopali, "Running Along the Cliff," is the wind that blows across the face of the high cliff of Palikū, that separates Kaʻaʻawa and Kualoa.

Kualoa ("Long Back"): The name is perhaps a reference to the backbone-like ridge of Palikū that extends out toward the sea from the Koʻolau mountains and dominates this land section. Backbone was a traditional metaphor for genealogy, and the face of the cliff on the Kualoa side is called Moʻo kapu o Hāloa, "Sacred genealogy of Hāloa," with each vertical ridge on the cliff representing a generation of chiefs. As at Kaʻaʻawa, Holopali is the wind.

Waikāne ("Waters [of] Kāne"): A reference to Kāne, the god of life-giving water. This fertile valley is blessed with springs and streams. The wind Kiliua suggests a "Fine, Gentle Rainfall."

Kuaʻaʻohe ("Stand and Wait"): Perhaps a lookout point on Ulupau

crater at the tip of Mōkapu Peninsula where one stood and waited for canoes coming from the eastern islands. Here the wind Mololani whirls ("molo") to heaven ("lani"). Mololani ("Well-kept") is also a crater nearby, the site of a localized creation story told by S.M. Kamakau (*Tales and Traditions*).

Kāneʻohe ("Bamboo Kāne"): Another reference to Kāne, the god of life-giving water, and to the bamboo that flourishes in this wet windward area, with its frequent rain showers swept in on the trade winds. ʻOhe was a kinolau, or body form, of this god. It was used to make knives (split bamboo has a sharp edge), musical instruments (nose flutes, pūʻili, kāʻekeʻeke), kapa decoration sticks, and water containers. The Ulumano, "Blowing Hard," is the wind here.

Kailua ("Two seas" or perhaps "two currents"): Malanai is a gentle breeze here.

Waimānalo ("Potable Water"): If traveler from Honolulu around Makapuʻu to the windward side of Oʻahu would find no running streams or good freshwater sources after leaving Kuliʻouʻou until he reached Waimānalo. Limu-līpuʻupuʻu is the wind here, a wind scented by a seaweed.

Pāhonu ("Enclosure for Turtles"): A rock pen near shore, where sea turtles were fattened for food which was kapu for the aliʻi. Alopali ("Cliff Face") is the wind, blowing along the high cliffs nearby.

Makapuʻu ("Bulging Eyes"): A lookout for fish and for travelers; this high bluff at the east end of Oʻahu was named for a powerful rock that attracted uhu (parrot fish) to the area; the rock had eight bulging eyes – black stones that protruded from the head of the rock. The wind from either direction (Kona, or southerly; or Koʻolau, or northeasterly) turns or wraps ("huli") around the headland of Makapuʻu.

Moolelo o Pakaa presented in narrative form the local geography I was looking for. In the fourth grade, along with memorizing the names of the fifty states of America and their capitals, it would have been a treat to memorize and learn to chant the ahupuaʻa and wind names of Oʻahu. The chant is a verbal map of the island and would have helped me understand the special character of each place and its wind and the complex geography of the coast we lived on.

The nature of local wind became even clearer to me after I sailed up and down the coast and around Oʻahu a number of times on a coastal sailing canoe when I worked on educational programs for the Polynesian Voyaging Society in the 1990s. Traveling by car or power boat detaches us from the earth, the seasons, and all living things. In a air-conditioned car going forty-five mph,

with the windows closed, you don't feel any local winds; even with the windows open, you feel only the onrush of air from the car's forward motion. On a sailing canoe, you are dependent on the winds to get from place to place. You notice a different wind blowing along each portion of the coast, from each valley of the island and around each headland, depending on the time of day, the terrain, the weather conditions, the season, and so on.

At the seashore, in a valley, on a mountain ridge, when you recognize a wind by its name, it is no longer just the movement of air molecules or the generic "wind"; it's a particular spirit of a locality, a fragrance, a familiar friend, a sign. Through such knowledge, your connection to and comfort and intimacy with a place grows stronger. One day at Kaʻaʻawa, I looked up toward the cliffs of Palikū and saw the wind pressing down the vegetation of the cliff in waves: Holopali is the wind's name.

In 1990, using recently developed desktop publishing technology that made book production relatively easy and inexpensive, I established Kalamakū Press and printed the Mookini-Nākoa translation of *Moolelo o Pakaa a me Kuapakaa* under the title *The Wind Gourd of Laʻamaomao*.

From reading Hawaiian literature, I discovered the Hawaiian calendar. When we were growing up, we were taught climate from the perspective of people living in temperate zones. The norm was four seasons, and Hawaiʻi was deficient because it supposedly didn't have seasons. In school, we wrote poetry celebrating spring, summer, fall, and winter, mimicking the seasonal poetry of New England, Europe, and East Asia.

Imagining one is supposed to be experiencing four seasons while living in the tropics can lead to a neurotic disjunction between behavior and reality: people here wear socks, shoes, slacks, jackets, and sweaters in 80 or 90 degree weather; they put up fake cardboard chimneys and Santa Clauses, plastic reindeer on fields of cotton representing snow, and Christmas trees decorated with tinsel icicles in December, when the temperature in Honolulu rarely drops below the mid-60s.

Transplants from temperate climates also praised Hawaiʻi for having a perpetual summer, as in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. This perspective blinds people to the seasonal changes in Hawaiʻi. Malo, Kamakau, and Kepelino have described the seasons month by month and the annual cycle of animal and plant life and weather associated with each month. As in other tropical places, there are two seasons: Kau, when the days are longer, hotter, and drier; and Hoʻoilo, when the days are shorter, cooler, and wetter. The rising and setting points of the sun move to their northern limits in Kau, the sun arching higher in the sky; then travel to their southern limits in Hoʻoilo, the sun's trajectory lower in the sky. Sunlight changes; golden afternoons become silvery and pale. The winds, currents, and surf change; animals and plants go through cycles of growth and migrations.

The beginning of the year is marked by a cluster of little stars called Makali‘i (“Little-Eyes” or “Little-Stars”; the Pleiades), which appears above the eastern horizon just after sunset. Earlier in the year, Makali‘i rises later in the evening. The six months of Ho‘oilo follow. Makali‘i appears higher and higher in the eastern sky at sunset. Three months later it is directly overhead at sunset; another three months, and it is at the western horizon at sunset, lost in the light of the sun, and the season of Kau is about to begin.

Makali‘i, a stingy chief, is said to have pulled up all the food on earth into his net. Astronomically, the constellation Makali‘i appears higher and higher in the sky at sunset as the rainy months associated with the reduced production of plant food proceeds. Then Makali‘i disappears into the sun and the six-month season of vigorous plant growth begins; at the end of the six months, Makali‘i appears again above the eastern horizon just after sunset, and the harvest festival of Makahiki takes place.

One story tells of a rat that nibbles through the cords of the net of Makali‘i; the food in the net falls and is scattered across the land. (Around harvest season, rats appear in the lowlands, escaping from the cold and rain of the mountains and looking for food in the coastal plains.) During the Makahiki celebration, the net of Makali‘i is lifted up symbolically and filled with food, prefiguring the ascent of Makali‘i in the evening sky; the net is shaken and if the food falls through the eyes of the net, the next year is supposed to have a bountiful harvest; if the food doesn't fall out, scarcity or famine will follow. A string figure (like a cat’s cradle) representing the net of Makali‘i has eight eyes, each one representing a kind of vegetable food – “taro, sweet potato, plantain, yam, arrowroot, fernroot, smilax, and another” (Beckwith). When one point is cut, the whole figure falls apart.

Farmers, bird-catchers, fishing people, and sailors depended on knowledge of the seasons to anticipate weather and sea conditions and the growth of plants and animals. Studying the Hawaiian calendar while observing weather and plant and animal life, I began to understand the seasonal cycle of the islands, which allowed me to live more in tune to its rhythm, anticipating conditions at each turning of the sun and planning life accordingly. (Researchers have found that awareness of the passing seasons stimulates brain rhythms and contributes to a sense of well-being and purpose.)

Studying Hawaiian literature also gave me a fuller appreciation of the native community and its cultural achievements and values. In these stories, we don’t find the colonial stereotype of the lazy or promiscuous native as the norm. There are lazy and promiscuous characters, but they are negative examples – the ones who fail or are punished. The heroic norm is depicted in characters like Pāka‘a and his son Kūapāka‘a, who exemplify social ideals like loyalty, humility, wisdom, wit, intelligence, foresight, courage, persistence, diligence, hard work, and righteous action; those who succeed do so because of their good character and knowledge of the natural world. Laziness was highly detested, as was stinginess and selfishness. Cultural heroes like the

gods Kūʻula-kai and his son ʻAiʻai are remembered for sharing: they taught the arts of fishing to the people, established koʻa (fishing grounds) and methods of conservation, and encouraged a fair and generous distribution of the catch.

While we were working on her translation of *Moolelo o Pakaa a me Kuapakaa*, Kiki gave me a copy of Amos Leib and A. Grove Day's annotated bibliography of Hawaiian legends in English. I used it as a map into the extensive body of Hawaiian literature recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by such scholars as Kamakau, Malo, Kepelino, Haleʻole, Kahiolo, Nakuina, Pūkuʻi. Ever since the missionaries had introduced the technologies of writing and printing in the early nineteenth century, kānaka maoli have been writing and publishing their stories and traditions. Stories were also collected and published by haole scholars, like Fornander and Thrum, who were keenly interested in native traditions.

I was particularly astounded by Kamakau's *Ruling Chiefs of Hawai'i* – stories of the line of chiefs of the Big Island that culminated with Kamehameha, who united the islands at the end of the eighteenth century. The translation was compiled from articles that appeared in two newspapers, *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* and *Ke Au Okoa*, between 1866 and 1871. The narratives translated by Pūkuʻi and others are at a level of literary excellence and complexity equal to the great works of history and political philosophy of Europe and Asia. That I had spent twenty years in the state public schools and university system and was unaware of Kamakau's work was astonishing to me.

Ruling Chiefs delineates a political philosophy that might be summed up as follows: a chief's right to rule existed only as long as he took care of the land and the people; his duty was to maintain the fertility of the land through righteous behavior and obedience to the gods, and to take care of "the big person and the little person" – that is, all the people. Those chiefs who failed to do this were killed.

The hierarchical social order described in the works of Kamakau and others (four classes: rulers, priests, commoners, and kauwā, or outcasts) seems to have been introduced by Tahitian chiefs who migrated to Hawaiʻi in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Their lengthy genealogies describe their descent from the gods to establish their right to rule. Outside the royal court, however, an older, more egalitarian social structure prevailed, based on the extended family, or ʻohana, living in a traditional home district. The ʻohana was led by a haku, a respected male elder. The title of haku, according to Handy and Pūkuʻi, "has no relation to class, politics, or occupation." The haku was simply a person who won the respect of his ʻohana by his leadership and wisdom: "the haku was no dictator but was subject to the advice and opinion of householders and of all other members of his ʻohana concerned in or affected by decision and enterprises."

During the 1990s, Kalamakū Press published various collections of native stories about fishing, sharks, places on Oʻahu, and voyaging and migrations. The press was dedicated to the belief that knowledge of native culture was basic to cultural literacy in Hawaiʻi and essential to the survival and well-being of the community. The stories had to be kept in print, at an affordable price.

The first publications were for the English-reading public. I selected works translated into or told in English by indigenous scholars who wrote in both Hawaiian and English, such as Emma and Moses Nakuina and Mary Kawena Pūkuʻi. At the same time, I also wanted to support the revitalization of the Hawaiian language, which was moving forward through programs at University of Hawaiʻi campuses, and in the Hawaiian language immersion schools (the first one established in 1987). In 1992, Kalamakū Press published the original Hawaiian language text of *Moolelo o Pakaa a me Kuapakaa.* In 1996, Charles Langlas, a professor at UH Hilo, sent in *He Moʻolelo no Kapaʻahu*, a collection of stories written in Hawaiian by Emma Kauhi about her homeland of Kapaʻahu on the island of Hawaiʻi. Kauhi's stories express her deep love of her home district, describing its special places and the local knowledge she acquired about them as a child. The area was covered by a lava flow in 1986, so some of the places she describes exist only in story today. Classrooms sets of her book were distributed to immersion schools and public libraries throughout the state. In 1999, I published a collection of essays called *Storied Landscapes: Hawaiian Literature and Place*, summarizing my research into native stories.

During the 1990s, interest in native traditions grew strongly, and newly established presses like ʻAhahui ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi, First People's Productions, ʻAha Pūnana Leo, ʻAi Pōhaku, and ʻŌiwi joined long-established presses like Bishop Museum, Kamehameha Schools, and John Dominis Holt's Topgallant (later Kūpaʻa) Press in publishing and reprinting works of traditional and contemporary literature and scholarship, in Hawaiian and in English. In 1996, ʻAhahui ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi began issuing the original Hawaiian articles that were the basis of the translations in *Ruling Chiefs*.

In 1990, I met John Dominis Holt, a literary pioneer; his Topgallant Press, founded in 1974, had published a range of native writers, from erudite scholar Rubellite Kawena Johnson to pidgin poet Joe Balaz. Holt was a writer as well, having published a classic essay, "On Being Hawaiian"; a play, *Kaulana Nā Pua*; a novel, *Waimea Summer*, a collection of stories, *Princess of the Night Rides and Other Tales*; and a long poem, *Hānai: A Poem for Liliuokalani*.

A man of great generosity, Holt was open to meeting and supporting any writer or publisher who was interested in Hawaiʻi's literature. He was looking for an editor and contacted me on the recommendation of writer and publisher Richard Hamasaki, who had worked with him on *Hānai*. Richard, his brother Mark, and kanaka maoli poet and activist Wayne Westlake were the founders

of ʻElepaio Press, which had been publishing contemporary indigenous and local multiethnic literature since the mid-1970s. R. Hamasaki and Westlake had also established the first multiethnic literature of Hawaiʻi course at the University of Hawaiʻi in 1981.

At the mansion on Pacific Heights where he and his wife, Frances "Patches" Damon, lived, Holt showed me a couple of works he wanted edited for publication. One was a manuscript of stories about Moanalua Valley, an ahupuaʻa bequeathed in 1883 by Bernice Pauahi Bishop to S.M. Damon, Frances Damon's grandfather and former partner in Bishop and Co. (later First Hawaiian Bank). The manuscript contained traditional stories of Moanalua, including a migration chant.

The second work was Holt's memoirs, which tells of his family genealogies, the loss of the family lands in Central Oʻahu to Waialua Sugar Plantation, and his experiences coming of age in Hawaiʻi in the 1920s and 30s. I found this work fascinating and accepted the job of editing it. Holt's memoirs lovingly describe what was dear to him about Hawaiʻi. He recalls the multiethnic Kalihi of his childhood:

> It was not a place; it was a protracted hula ʻauwana.…Here was the melting pot of Honolulu, in all it colorful ramifications. Our immediate neighbors were Chinese-Hawaiians. Across a large, empty lot, owned by a family into which one of our cousins had married, lived a renegade of a prominent hapa-haole family with his wife and five sons. Down one of the lanes that ran perpendicular into ours sat a Japanese language school. Directly across the street, two Japanese families occupied old-fashioned cottages built at the turn of the century. A tight cluster of six tiny houses sat next to the empty lot below us. A Filipino family, a Puerto Rican widow and her family, and a young Portuguese couple shared the "camp," as this little cluster was always called, with three Hawaiian families.

Holt spent his early childhood (up to age seven) in the more affluent neighborhoods of downtown Honolulu, but financial difficulties and his hapa-haole mother's conversion to fundamentalist Christianity precipitated a move to Kalihi in 1926. At first he found the new neighborhood "challenging and depressing," but eventually he embraced "the noisy, energetic, friendly plebeian milieu" where makaʻāinana values prevailed and where Hawaiian was still spoken in everyday life. Living in Kalihi, he felt free to discover his Hawaiian self:

> We had always considered ourselves hapa-haole – a feeling combining the way we looked at the island to which we were born, the people who shared it with us, and the culture we had produced. But the air itself was Hawaiian. Living in Kalihi made me more Hawaiian in every way. I would come closer to the mystery of feeling and being Hawaiian

while living there. I was given freedom to be myself and to be myself was to be more Hawaiian. In Kalihi I would come to terms with the Hawaiian writers Malo, Kamakau, and ʻIʻi, with my Hawaiian cousins, and with the glorious fulfillment in connecting myself with the great culture that provided one-half of my heritage.

In "What was Dear to My Heart," through the symbolism of foods and holiday feasts where he was welcomed, Holt celebrates the multicultural twentieth-century Hawaiʻi he grew up in:

The Chinese gave great dinners of stuffed oysters, shrimp Cantonese, egg rolls, broiled squab, hum hah pork, lop cheong, sweet-sour cabbage and meat, kau yuk, and many other delicacies.

The Hawaiians celebrated by giving lūʻau, replete with kālua puaʻa (pig cooked in an imu, or underground oven), various types of raw fish and limu (seaweed), chicken or squid fixed with taro leaves and coconut milk, and sweet potatoes. The feast was topped off with rich, custard-filled cream cakes and washed down with soda pop of all flavors. The tables were decorated with fern leaves, hibiscus flowers, bananas, papayas, breadfruit, and mangoes.

The Portuguese cooked great pieces of pickled pork. They produced marvelous breads and a tasty doughnut called malasadas for feast days and Holy Ghost celebrations.

The Japanese, at New Year's, would spend a half-year's wages on wonderfully decorative and imaginative delicacies. Sweet rice-paste cakes called mochi were filled with a black bean mixture called black sugar. Fish was prepared in the most stylish and incredible ways; a simulated net carved from a great turnip would cover a whole fish. This splendid display would be given a final embellishment of flower-like decorations carved from carrots and radishes.

The Puerto Rican people feasted on cundudis, pigeon peas and rice, and pateles made with mashed green bananas that served the purpose of corn meal in a tamale. They also served deliciously flavored roasted bits of beef or pork.

At wedding celebrations, the Filipino people roasted whole pigs over a spit and prepared a strongly spiced dish made from chicken or pork, called adobo. It was a marvelous sight to come upon a little house in the cane field camps of the sugar plantations and find the golden-crusted carcass of a hog being patiently turned on a spit over hot coals. It was even more rewarding to stay and be offered bits of the barbecued pork, especially the skin, roasted crisp with the consistency of peanut brittle.

But while Holt relishes this new multicultural society, he was also acutely aware of the loss of the traditional way of life and hardships in the kānaka

maoli community. He describes Kona, on the Big Island in the 1930s, as a remote place, "woebegone," suspended "betwixt the old days and the new." Despite its abundance of fish and fruits:

> … my child's recollection of Kona's forlorn, destitute look stayed with me with a foreboding persistence. For a span of years between my childhood and shortly after World War II, before the great hotel and tourist explosion took place, Kona lost many of its kamaʻāina, who migrated to other places. It was a period of heart-breaking loneliness and destitution. The little kuleana houses remained in various stages of disintegration and were rather brutal reminders of a once flourishing community no longer able to contain or support its native Hawaiian population. My lingering childhood recollection of Kona is the surrounding Hawaiian kuleana – whose appearance seemed to be tattered and sadly abandoned.

"Rainbows Under Water," the first chapter of Holt's memoirs, contrasts the modern world with the old Hawaiʻi. The modern world is represented by his father, who killed sharks for sport and pleasure; the ancient world by Kaiʻa, the caretaker of the family's Kawela Bay property. As kahu to the shark ʻaumākua who live in the bay, Kaiʻa took the young Holt diving to visit them to pick off the barnacles encrusting their eyes. The climactic scene describes a shark hunt in which his father shoots the sharks in the very eyes (symbols of the soul) Kaiʻa took care of:

> My father and his friends carried out shark hunts in the outer reaches of the bay's deep water. There, the carcass of an old bull or mule or horse would be dragged out as bait, one of its feet lashed with cable, the other end of which had been secured to rocks at the edge of the bay. Gruesome debacles resulted as the sharks eventually swarmed in to devour the bait. Using high-powered rifles, my father and his friends slaughtered sharks by the dozens at close range, shooting them directly in the eyes – eyes that I had watched Kaiʻa delicately clean. When one shark was injured, the others in a feeding frenzy would devour it.
>
> Kaiʻa, hiding in the brush on shore, would be horrified, wailing over the massacre of his ʻaumākua.

The experience left the young Holt "hiding in the bottom of the boat, crying hysterically," and earned him the label of "sissy" from his father: "Puppah shouted at me, 'Why don't you be like your sister? She's fearless – watching us shoot those vicious brutes doesn't affect her at all.'"

Holt's greatest love was for the people, places, and things of old Hawaiʻi, which he held to, though he sensed it was inexorably changing:

> I used to visit the great dancer ʻIolani Luahine at her cottage on

the grounds of the Royal Mausoleum. She had dozens of maile leis in various states of desiccation draped around her pictures, both photographs and small oils and watercolors.

"Why do you keep so much maile?" I inquired.

She cast an unbelieving glance at me as if to say, "Must you ask?" She smiled, and her great eyes danced. "There is mana and love in those leis. They were all gifts. When they are too dried to be happy I take them down and put fresh ones in their place."

ʻIolani was a born mystic, a truly spiritual being who added the unseen elements of spirituality to everything she did and thought. She was an old soul who seemed to have been born centuries ago, a contemporary of Pele, one of her sisters, perhaps.

It is good to hear that maile is beginning to thrive again in certain places where it was once over-harvested. It is also good to hear that a certain kamaʻāina is cultivating maile and selling it to lei makers. His plantation is at the five thousand foot level on Mauna Loa, high above the newly accrued clutter of development below ceaselessly growing with grotesque vigor along the Kona shores.

Holt's Kūpaʻa Press published *Recollections* in 1993 – the year Holt passed away at age 73. His memoirs has remained my favorite work of local literature, the book that expresses most powerfully the tragedy, the mystery, and the greatness of Hawaiʻi.

When I returned from Berkeley to Kapiʻolani Community College in 1988, I wanted to promote more local, multiethnic readings in literature and writing courses at the college and develop courses in local multicultural studies, like those taught at Berkeley.

Faculty support for local ethnic studies was not strong back then. While eighty percent of our students are of Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, or mixed ancestry, many born and raised in Hawaiʻi, the majority of the faculty and administration had not grown up here and those who had been educated in Eurocentric universities. Not surprisingly, in the 1980s, one rarely saw any books by local writers assigned in any course on campus. The only local multicultural heritage course taught regularly (one section per semester at a school with over 6,500 students) was Hawaiian History, and the text for the class was written by a haole, from an American capitalist point of view. The Hawaiian Language program was growing, but Hawaiian Literature in Translation was offered once every three years, in rotation with Chinese and Japanese literature.

A couple of teachers in the writing program had started to use assignments exploring local identities and pidgin English, using Murayama's *All I Asking for Is My Body* as a text. But when I suggested that we require a selection

of native and local literature, along with American and world literature, as a means of helping our students to develop local identities in national and global contexts, the department chair told me this requirement would infringe on the academic freedom of the faculty and declined to support it. (While English departments can require their faculty to teach works from the American or European literary canon, native and local literature has not yet acquired that privileged status.)

But interest in native and local studies continued to grow among faculty and students. By 1996, there were enough interested faculty to establish Mālama Hawai‘i, a cluster of courses leading to a two-year degree with a focus on Hawai‘i and Hawaiian language and culture. We selected faculty and courses in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and speech and writing to support the program. We also developed new courses in Hawaiian mythology and in the multiethnic literature of Hawai‘i.

Not unexpectedly, some faculty continued to resist native and local literature. One senior faculty member in literature told me *The Wind Gourd of La‘amaomao* wasn't really literature – even though it has all the elements of literature, and has been successfully taught in high school and college English classes. *The Wind Gourd* provides an excellent cross-cultural comparison to Homer's *Odyssey.* Both narratives feature seafarers who return home to take revenge on their enemies with the aid of a son; yet the cultural perspectives of the two works are very different. The ability of Pāka‘a and his son to control the winds and to navigate to wherever they wanted to go among the Hawaiian islands contrasts strongly with Ulysses' inability to find his way from Troy to Ithaca for ten years while being blown about the Mediterranean at the mercy of the winds and gods.

Not only would this multicultural comparison help students understand our community, but the understanding would also be useful for those who ended up living elsewhere, as communities everywhere in the world are increasingly multicultural. While the particular cultures of each locality might be different, the principles of multicultural perspectives and the interaction of the local and the non-local could be applied anywhere. At the same time students might learn to see how local knowledge could enhance and enrich their lives.

But our faculty back then generally lacked the vision and confidence of the faculty at Berkeley who adopted its American Cultures requirement in 1988 to shape their curriculum to serve their state and its multicultural population; under the banner of tradition, most of our faculty wanted to continue to teach a curriculum formulated decades earlier, elsewhere, in a different socio-historical context.

But the resistance was at a deeper level than wanting to stick to tradition; it was rooted in fear. I sensed that some of the faculty were afraid that native and local knowledge would compete with the Western knowledge they had invested so many years in acquiring, thus lowering its value in the marketplace of ideas. Perhaps fewer students would be clamoring to get into their courses.

This fear, in my experience, was unfounded, as the majority of college students have been educated to have little interest in native or local knowledge, and many, like their teachers, are fearful or contemptuous of it. They prefer to study what they have been told is important, what will help them to be successful in academia and in their careers; how, they ask, is native and local knowledge going to help me make more money? Still, the resistant faculty had grown accustomed to (and perhaps enjoyed) being worshiped by their students as the *sole* authorities on and masters of a monocultural universe. So instead of supporting the development of knowledge about the place they live in and the community that pays their salary, they simply withdrew into their shells of their Western knowledge.

In order to connect the classroom to this place, Mālama Hawai‘i began to integrate learning activities that involved exploring the land and community. Students in our botany and Hawaiian language and culture classes went to help restore kalo lo‘i (ponds for growing wetland taro) at Lyon Arboretum, a University-operated botanical garden in nearby Mānoa Valley; students also planted and cared for native plants on campus.

A comparable ocean activity on native fish and fishing in a marine biology course might have been a good complement to the land plants activities. Marine biology is taught as Western science. I could see how dissecting a fish could be useful to teach fish anatomy. But a much more meaningful learning experience (at least to me) would be for students to study the habits and habitats of a fish like the uhu, or parrot fish, in its ocean environment. Students could snorkel to make observations.

The lesson might also include catching and cooking an uhu using traditional methods. To pass the class, students would be required to catch an uhu in a way that would ensure that the species would continue to flourish or increase in its habitat for the next 2,000 years. The exit exam would require students to research such questions as when and where they could catch uhu; what varieties of algae and coral uhu eat, and how to protect its food supply; how to recognize a male and female fish (females sometimes turn into males); the stages of its growth and how and when in its life cycle it reproduces, and so on.

What a wealth of knowledge students would acquire, not to mention, if they passed the class, an excellent meal! Two of my most memorable meals were of uhu: one was an umu-baked uhu on the beach at Ho‘oumi on Nukuhiva in the Marquesas. The other was a small uhu speared off the Mo‘omomi dunes on Moloka‘i; it was wrapped in aluminum foil in a sauce of mayonnaise, shōyu, onions, garlic, and ginger, and broiled on a kiawe wood fire. It was so ono that we picked tidbits of the soft white meat off the bones and foil and licked the sauce off our fingers.

One intriguing method of catching uhu is described in Kamakau's *The Works of the People of Old*. Leaning over the side of a canoe, the fisherman uses a live uhu tied to a string to lure other uhu into a handheld net. It is a method of fishing that only an expert can do, involving observation, knowledge, and multiple tasks:

> His head was underwater as he watched closely for fish; his ears were 'racks' (haka) for kukui nut meat and his mouth would spew forth chewed kukui meat which becalmed the sea so that he could see the bottom. One hand of the fisherman directed the movements of the decoy uhu, and his left hand sculled (koali) the paddle inside the ama to keep the nose of the canoe headed into the wind.

In this position the fisherman would wait for other uhu to come up to the decoy to honi, or lie with it; then he would pull up his net and capture his dinner. While learning this method of fishing, students could investigate why some uhu approach the decoy, while others shy away; and if they do approach, why different uhu behave differently:

> The visitor might be an uhu that would just hover about and watch, or one that would avoid the decoy, or one that would show off, or act bashful.…if it were a bold uhu 'a'a that was being decoyed the fisherman would be on the alert for this would be a wild one. He would pull up the net when they were three or four anana [fathoms] away from each other, lest it catch up to the decoy and shred its scales [rendering the decoy useless].

A fisherman from the Kona coast of Hawai'i told me an uhu might be territorial and thus will attack a stranger fish placed near its home.

Learning to catch uhu in this way would have been a perfect culminating activity for a Mālama Hawai'i course in marine biology, but it would never make it into a school classroom. It would be too dangerous for students. Amazingly, in an island home surrounded by ocean, the majority of people haven't been taught to swim; nor are they taught ocean safety. The schools focus on teaching students land activities, like football, baseball, basketball, track and field, tennis, golf, badminton, and archery. The physical education curriculum, like the rest of the curriculum imported from continental American schools, is not a good fit for schools on a tropical island. The assumption has been that ocean activities are more dangerous than land activities. But this assumption is only true for people with no knowledge of or experience in the sea; someone who knows the ocean is less likely to get injured swimming or snorkeling or surfing than someone playing basketball or football. (In recent years outrigger canoe paddling has become a school-sponsored sport; and with special permission and safety guidelines, the Polynesian Voyaging Society was able to introduce canoe sailing into curriculum at selected schools. And finally,

in 2004, after years of debate, surfing received Board of Education approval, though issues of liability, safety, and funding need to be worked out before any school programs can start. Generally, land sports are still preferred.)

But perhaps the main reason why the uhu fishing lesson couldn't be taught was that no instructor knew enough about local fish, coastal geography and conditions, and traditional fishing methods to teach the lesson. The ideal teacher would have been someone like Pāka'a; in *Moolelo o Pakaa* this expert fisherman is described netting uhu with a decoy off the south coast of Moloka'i. I asked the fisherman who told me about the territorial behavior of the uhu if he knew anyone who still fished with a decoy. He said the last person he knew of, from Hāna, Maui, no longer fished. One of my students told me that when she was young, she saw her father use a decoy when netting uhu; but, she added, he hadn't taught her how to do it.

Crossing Seas

One day in 1989, on a shelf in the back of a San Francisco Chinatown bookstore, I found *Vikings of the Pacific* by Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck). Hiroa, of Maori and Irish ancestry, was a scholar of Hawaiian and Polynesian culture who served as director of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu from 1936 until his death in 1951. *Vikings of the Pacific* recounts his travels among the islands of Polynesia, researching their cultures and making ancestral connections. While some of the material is outdated (the book was originally published in 1939 as *Vikings of the Sunrise*), it remains an excellent introduction to the Polynesian cultures, summarizing voyaging and migration stories, outlining mythologies, and describing the material culture and world view that enabled Polynesians to discover and flourish for centuries on small islands separated by wide expanses of open ocean. By the time the Europeans sailed into this ocean in the sixteenth century, practically every inhabitable island had already been settled.

Hiroa's book provided me with an appreciative native perspective on the ocean that surrounded my home island. I should have been required to read this book in intermediate or high school; instead, I found it by chance over 2,000 miles from home, when I was thirty-six years old. (At about the same time I read Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, on the Trobriand Islands Kula Ring.)

A couple of years after I returned to Honolulu from San Francisco, my colleague Esther "Kiki" Mookini introduced me to the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS). Kiki was a volunteer using her Hawaiian language expertise to help PVS develop educational material about Hawaiian voyaging traditions. She invited me to a meeting of the education committee.

PVS was founded in 1973 by Ben Finney, an anthropologist from California, teaching at the University of Hawai'i; Tommy Holmes, a writer and waterman; and Herb Kāne, a kanaka maoli artist, scholar, and sailor. Their mission was to research and celebrate the discovery and settlement of Hawai'i by Polynesian seafarers many generations before Captain Cook arrived.

Oral traditions told of purposeful voyages of discovery, travel, and migration by these seafarers who used the rising and setting points of celestial bodies to guide them. Seventeenth century European visitors to the Pacific, like the Spaniard Andia y Varela, described how the Polynesians navigated in their journals:

> When the night is a clear one they steer by the stars; and this is the easiest navigation for them because, there being many stars not only do they note by them the bearings on which the several islands with which they are in touch lie, but also the harbours in them, so that they make straight for the entrance by following the rhumb of the particular star that rises or sets over it; and they hit it off with as much precision as the most expert navigator of civilized nations could achieve.

In 1957, an amateur historian in New Zealand published a book expressing doubt that the Polynesians could have navigated by the stars over long distances; he proposed instead that they had drifted to their island homes, discovering them by accident. He dismissed the oral traditions as myths. The founders of PVS wanted to challenge this historian's assumption that long-distance navigation without instruments wasn't possible. They planned to build a performance-accurate replica of a voyaging canoe and launched her in 1975; in 1976, a crew navigated her without instruments from Hawai'i to Tahiti – the longest open-ocean route in Polynesia. The double-hulled, twin-masted canoe was called *Hōkūle'a*, after the zenith star of Hawai'i, Arcturus.

Originally, PVS planned to make one voyage on *Hōkūle'a* to demonstrate that long voyages by traditional navigation were possible; then the canoe would be put in a museum. But the success of the first voyage was so significant and inspirational for the kānaka maoli community in reviving its traditional culture that *Hōkūle'a* has continued to sail.

In 1991, PVS was planning *Hōkūle'a*'s fourth and fifth voyages to the South Pacific. In 1992, she would sail to Rarotonga in the Cook Islands, via Tahiti, to participate in the sixth annual Festival of Pacific Arts celebrating a pan-Pacific revival of traditional canoe-building and navigation inspired in part by the voyages of *Hōkūle'a*. Then, in 1995, *Hōkūle'a* would join *Hawai'iloa*, a second Hawaiian voyaging canoe PVS planned to build, on a voyage to Nukuhiva in the Marquesas Islands. From Nukuhiva, the two Hawaiian canoes, joined by a fleet of other canoes, would sail to Hawai'i. (Based on linguistic and cultural evidence, scholars believe that some of the early settlers to Hawai'i came from there.)

At an education committee meeting on the lawn of the Bishop Museum, Kiki introduced me to *Hōkūle'a*'s chief navigator, Nainoa Thompson. In 1980, Nainoa navigated *Hōkūle'a* from Hawai'i to Tahiti and back, the first Hawaiian to accomplish this feat in over 500 years; in 1985-87, he guided her on an epic voyage through the heart of Polynesia – to Tahiti and Rarotonga, then out to Aotearoa (New Zealand), the southwestern corner of the Polynesian Triangle; then back to Hawai'i via Tonga, Sāmoa, Tahiti, and Rangiroa in the Tuamotus. Planned after a careful study of weather patterns in the Pacific, the voyage took two years to complete, in seven legs. When Nainoa brought

Hōkūle'a home in 1987, he was welcomed as a hero and celebrated in song.

After this epic voyage, Nainoa focused his efforts on education, on teaching a new generation of voyagers the knowledge he had acquired. To teach his navigation to apprentices, he needed a glossary of traditional Hawaiian star names and other materials. When Kiki told him I could help with research and writing, he invited me to sit in on the training sessions for his crew and navigators in the Bishop Museum planetarium. It was an opportunity to step into the ancient world of voyaging I had read about in Hiroa's book. In the weeks that followed, I compiled an annotated glossary of star names from Rubellite Kawena Johnson's *Nā Inoa Hōkū* and Maud Makemson's *The Morning Star Rises*. From this glossary Nainoa and the crew members selected the traditional names they would use, and gave new names to stars and star groups whose names had been lost.

Like everyone in our generation in Hawai'i, Nainoa was educated in a colonial system that promoted cultural knowledge with little connection to Hawai'i or his Hawaiian ancestry. At Punahou School, one of the elite private academies of Honolulu, he wondered about the books he was assigned to read: "Why are we reading [these books] about dead people in faraway lands?" He recalls the excitement he felt when, in 1974, two years after he graduated from high school, he met Herb Kawainui Kāne, the principal designer of *Hōkūle'a*, who told him about the plan to launch and sail a voyaging canoe to Tahiti:

> Herb's house was filled with paintings and pictures of canoes, nautical charts, star charts, and books everywhere! Interesting books! Over dinner Herb told us how they were going to build a canoe and sail it 2,500 miles without instruments – the old way. "We're gonna follow the stars, and the canoe is gonna be called after that star," Herb said, pointing to the star Hōkūle'a. This voyage would help to show that the Polynesians came here by sailing and navigating their canoes – not just happening to drift here on ocean currents or driven by winds. The voyage would do something very important for the Hawaiian people and for the rest of the world.
>
> In that moment, all the parts connected in me that had seemed unconnected in my life. I was 20! I was looking for something challenging and meaningful! I had a hard time finding that in the four walls of the school. Here it was – in the history, the heritage, the charts, the stars, the ocean, and the dream ... there was so much relevance in that dream. I wanted to follow Herb; I wanted to be part of that dream. (Speidel and Inn)

The art of open ocean navigation hadn't been practiced in Hawai'i for more than twenty generations. For its first voyage to Tahiti, PVS tried to enlist

Tevake, an aging navigator from the Polynesian outlier of Santa Cruz, to guide *Hōkūleʻa*; six months after contacting Tevake, PVS learned he had disappeared mysteriously at sea. PVS turned next to Mau Piailug, a master navigator from the atoll of Satawal in the Caroline Islands of Micronesia, where traditional navigation was still being practiced.

Mau was open to new challenges: he had never sailed outside of Micronesia; nor had he ever navigated 2,500 miles of open ocean before. (The longest sailing route in his home region was 500-600 miles.) Still, given that Tahiti was located among islands (Tahiti Nui and the Tuamotus), stretching east to west for over a thousand miles, Mau realized he could use his strategies of navigation to get there from Hawaiʻi. He could hold a course SE by S by the stars, or on cloudy, starless nights, by the motion of the ocean swells and the direction of the wind. In twenty to thirty days, the canoe would reach the seas surrounding Tahiti Nui and the Tuamotus, and Mau would be able to find an island using his land-finding techniques – observing sea life, swell patterns, and the flight of land-based seabirds. After he found and identified an island, he could reorient the canoe and head for Tahiti. An experienced Tahitian seaman, Rodo Williams, was assigned to the crew to help Mau identify islands.

After thirty-two days, Mau found the island of Mataiva in the Tuamotus, two hundred miles north of Tahiti; after resting there for a day, the crew sailed to Papeʻete.

When *Hōkūleʻa* arrived, a huge crowd of Tahitians – about half the population of the island – converged on Papeʻete harbor to greet the canoe and celebrate the voyage. A national holiday was declared. Assigned as a crew member for the voyage back to Hawaiʻi, Nainoa witnessed the celebration and shared the great pride the Tahitians felt in the voyaging heritage of Polynesia. He saw the celebration as "both the affirmation of what a great heritage we come from, but also a renewal of the spirit of who we are as a people today." Mau's amazing navigational feat inspired Nainoa to envision navigating the canoe himself, to learn Mau's art. But Mau abandoned the canoe in Tahiti, disappointed and angered over conflicts between kānaka maoli crew members and the canoe's leadership, which included both haoles and kānaka maoli. Frustrations had mounted during the long periods of uncertainty in preparation for the voyage and in the long, hard passage to Tahiti; in the end, off Tahiti, some blows were thrown.

Without Mau, *Hōkūleʻa* sailed back to Hawaiʻi under captain Gordon Piʻianaiʻa and navigator Kimo Lyman, who used a sextant and compass.

Back home, Nainoa and others were determined to sail to Tahiti again with a Hawaiian navigator guiding the canoe. He began studying non-instrument navigation – observing the night sky, taking university courses in weather and oceanography, studying the movement of celestial bodies in the Bishop Museum planetarium with astronomy lecturer Will Kyselka, reading what he could find on traditional navigation. (Two excellent books on traditional navigation in the Pacific were available – Lewis' *We the Navigators* and

Gladwin's *East Is a Big Bird*.)

In 1978, the canoe departed on a second voyage to Tahiti. The plan was for Nainoa to navigate without instruments, with Gordon Piʻianaiʻa charting the course with instruments as back-up. But tragedy struck before the canoe left Hawaiian waters. Gale force winds were blowing on the afternoon of departure. Despite the bad weather, the PVS leadership felt pressured by the schedule and the media to allow the canoe to depart. After crossing the Kaiwi Channel, she ran into trouble in the middle of the night, south of Molokaʻi. Waves breaking over the deck flooded one of the hulls, making the canoe difficult to control in the heavy seas. The winds and seas capsized the canoe. The communication equipment was lost and there was no escort boat.

The next day, the winds and seas were still high as the crew clung to the overturned canoe. Fatigue and hypothermia took their toll; one crew member told me of the anxiety they felt as the canoe drifted away from the islands in the west-flowing current and northeasterly winds. Crew member Eddie ʻAikau, an expert lifeguard and big wave surfer, convinced the leadership to allow him to attempt to paddle on a surfboard for help. Lānaʻi, the closest island, was to the east. Eddie paddled off. Nainoa swam out with him for a short way, then returned to the canoe.

The next evening the overturned canoe was spotted by a plane and the crew was rescued. Eddie never reached Lānaʻi. Nainoa and PVS, with much help from the community, searched for Eddie for weeks; the only clue of what might have happened was a surfboard tumbling in ocean swells, spotted from a helicopter.

Grieving and stunned by the loss of such a valued member of the community, Nainoa and PVS were faced with two possible scenarios: abandon the dream voyage as too dangerous, or continue to pursue it with renewed determination and better planning and preparation to make the voyage succeed. For Nainoa, the choice was clear. Abandoning the project would mean Eddie had given his life only to teach a painful lesson. Nainoa was determined to fulfill his and Eddie's dream of navigating *Hōkūleʻa* to their ancestral homeland – raising Hawaiki from the sea.

Nainoa knew that Mau was the key: Mau was the only living person who had done it. Nainoa flew to Satawal to see if Mau would come to Hawaiʻi and teach him. Mau met with him for half an hour, but made no commitment. Four months later, in 1979, Mau showed up in Hawaiʻi. He told Nainoa he came because he didn't want another tragedy to occur.

Mau's compassion and willingness to share his knowledge and to help the kānaka maoli community relearn its voyaging traditions has been an inspiration to Nainoa to teach others what he has learned. (Mau was breaking tradition in teaching his art to an outsider, but in his mind, he was acting to preserve the tradition, which was in danger of being forgotten on Satawal, as the island entered the modern world and its six hundred people began adopting Western ways. Mau had taught navigation to kanaka maoli seaman Shorty Bertelmann

on the first voyage to Tahiti; Bertelmann later became the navigator of the Big Island canoe *Makali'i*.)

Another key figure was Nainoa's father, Myron "Pinky" Thompson, a tough combat veteran who returned from World War II with a bad eye and a vision to strengthen the kānaka maoli community by caring for and educating the children and revitalizing the traditional culture. Pinky was able to rally and organize community support to secure funding for another voyage. Nainoa began training at sea under Mau, while continuing to study in the planetarium with Will Kyselka.

In 1980, Nainoa felt ready to take on the challenge of finding Tahiti as Mau had done in 1976. But unlike Mau, who was chosen and trained as a navigator from infancy by his grandfather, Nainoa was just beginning to learn as an adult, and he wasn't confident in his ability to tell direction if the night sky was cloudy and starless, as it often was in the doldrums, just north of the equator:

> Before we left I was panicking. I had the safety of the entire crew in my hands. … The part of the trip I dreaded the most was the doldrums. I had no confidence that I could get through it. I thought that I could only accurately navigate if I had visual celestial clues and that when I got into the doldrums there would be a hundred percent cloud cover, and I would be blind.

But Nainoa and the crew had trained rigorously and were committed to the voyage. *Hōkūle'a* left from Hilo. She had been modified to make her more seaworthy, and this time, an escort boat would shadow her. Thirty days later, *Hōkūle'a* arrived in Tahiti, having sailed a course very similar to the one Mau had sailed in 1976. A special mana helped Nainoa find his way through the doldrums:

> When we arrived in the doldrums, the sky was black. It was solid rain. The wind was switching around. It was about twenty-five knots, and we were moving fast. That's the worst thing that can happen – you are going fast and you don't know where you're going. The guys steering the canoe were looking for direction and that increased the pressure, especially because it was my first voyage. I couldn't tell the steersmen where to steer. I was very, very tense. To prevent fatigue, you cannot allow yourself to get physically tense, but I couldn't stop feeling tense.
>
> I was so exhausted that I backed up against the rail to rest. Then something happened that allowed me to understand where the moon was, without seeing it. When I gave up fighting to find the moon with my eyes, I settled down. I suddenly felt this warmth come over me and I knew where the moon was. The sky was so black, I couldn't see the moon, but I could feel where it was.
>
> From the feeling of warmth and the image of the moon came a strong sense of confidence. I knew where to go. I directed the canoe on

> a new course and then, just for a moment, there was a hole in the clouds and the light of the moon shone through – just where I expected it to be. I can't explain it, but that was one of the most precious moments in all my sailing experience. I realized there was some deep connection I was making, something very deep inside my abilities and my senses that goes beyond the analytical, beyond seeing with my eyes.

Mau served as Nainoa's mentor on the voyage, stepping in only once to assist his apprentice. On a morning when landfall was near, the flight path of a manu-o-Kū puzzled Nainoa. The white tern was flying south in the morning, which usually indicates that its home island is to the north since these land-based seabirds leave home at sunrise to fish. But he had seen birds flying south the previous evening, heading home. Was the island to the north or south? That night the crew had lowered the sails so they wouldn't run past an island in the dark, or worse, run into a dangerous fringing reef of an atoll. How could the island have moved during the night? Or were there two islands, one north and one south? Nainoa decided to head back north; Mau told him no, continue south, and an island would appear within an hour. Mau had noticed that the bird flying south had a fish in its beak; the female bird had left home before sunrise to get breakfast for her young and was returning to feed them. After an hour of sailing south, the crew sighted the atoll of Tikehau.

Mau hadn't navigated *Hōkūleʻa* from Tahiti to Hawaiʻi in 1976. Destiny left for Nainoa this journey home to our remote and isolated mid-ocean archipelago. What an incredible adventure it must have been for his ancestors to sail so far north, across the equator and the doldrums, with the familiar southern sky disappearing below the horizon behind them, and new stars appearing in the northern sky! The voyagers must have been amazed to discover a star that, unlike all the other stars in the sky, did not seem to move. They called it Hōkūpaʻa, the Fixed Star. The northern sky appeared to be rotating around it. And the farther the voyagers sailed north, the higher in the sky this steady star appeared. When it was about a span and a half of an outstretched hand above the horizon, or 21 degrees high – a chain of large, fertile islands appeared from the sea:

> …Hawaiʻi-kua-uli
> He ʻāina loaʻa i ka moana
> I hoea mai loko o ka ʻale
> I ka halehale poi pu a Kanaloa
>
> …green-backed Hawaiʻi
> A land found in the ocean
> Thrown up amid the waves
> From the very depths of Kanaloa.

The newly discovered islands were fixed in a map of stars, winds, and swells in the memories of those who returned home, and this memory made possible later voyages of settlement.

Nainoa uses dead reckoning in his navigation, memorizing the distances and directions the canoe travels each day and adjusting his course daily. In the early voyages, he slept very little – a couple of hours a day, in short catnaps. After a couple of weeks of sleep deprivation, fatigue makes complex mental calculations and memorization difficult, so the sailing strategy to Hawai‘i had to be kept simple. Nainoa planned to sail north from Tahiti, staying upwind, or east, of the islands. An imaginary local longitude line he calls a reference course, drawn between Hawai‘i and Tahiti, would help him keep track of how far east he might be. This reference course takes into account the average direction and strength of winds and currents, the windward ability of the canoe, and lee drift. When he had determined that the canoe was at the mid-latitude of Hawai‘i and east of it, he would turn west and sail to at this latitude to intersect the archipelago – a 180-mile-wide target between the headland of Ka Lae on Hawai‘i and the cliffs of Hanalei on the north coast of Kaua‘i.

For this strategy to succeed, Nainoa would need a relatively accurate way of determining when he was at the mid-latitude of Hawai‘i. One clue was the altitude of Hōkūpa‘a 21 degrees above the horizon. But the higher a star (21 degrees is relatively high), the more difficult it is to measure its altitude by hand accurately enough for navigation. A better guide came to Nainoa in a dream: Hānaiakamalama, the Southern Cross, when it is upright traversing the meridian. At 21 degrees north latitude, the top star of the Cross is the same distance to the bottom star as the bottom star is to the horizon – about 6 degrees. The image of the two equal distances provides a check on the navigator’s hand measurement to ensure that he is within the margin of error to hit a 180-mile-wide target.

Nainoa scheduled the voyage so that Hānaiakamalama would be crossing the meridian during the hours of darkness. The voyage also had to be timed so that there would be some moonlight on the horizon to render it visible at night as the canoe approached Hawai‘i. Nainoa chose the month of May for the return voyage, just before the hurricane season, when the Southern Cross transits the meridian at about eight p.m. Toward the end of May when the canoe would be approaching Hawai‘i, the moon would be full.

The plan worked beautifully. After twenty-two days at sea, Nainoa found his way home, sighting Mauna Kea, Hawai‘i’s tallest mountain, in the horizon clouds to the west.

In the summer of 1992, I started going to Pier 41 in Honolulu Harbor as a volunteer to help prepare *Hōkūle‘a* for her fourth voyage. The canoe had been

disassembled, and a group of apprentice navigators and novice crew members under the supervision of veterans were replacing or refinishing old parts and lashing the canoe back together. Having worked with my father building three fishing boats, I had a basic understanding of the work that needed to be done; what was different was the intricate lashings used to hold the parts of the canoe together. The art of lashing, originally with coconut husk cordage, had been passed down from the stone age, before metal fastenings were available. The lashings were ideal for ocean-going canoes: they gave the canoe joints both flexibility and strength, allowing the wooden canoes to withstand the relentless pounding of swells without cracking.

One of the veterans assigned to teach the novices lashing was Tava Taupu Teikihe'epo, a native of Nukuhiva and a descendant of Pakoko, one of its most famous warrior. A carver of stone and wood, Tava came to Hawai'i in 1970 to demonstrate the arts of the Marquesas at the Polynesian Cultural Center and settled in Kona, Hawai'i. He found work as a cultural expert for the National Park Service at Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau, carving tiki and building and maintaining traditional walls and houses.

Tava was a crew member during the tragic 1978 voyage and has sailed on every voyage since. He is one of the master sailors that Nainoa trusts fully to teach young people the arts of voyaging.

Tava has the fearsome appearance of a warrior – stocky and muscular, with his head shaved bald and forearms as thick as bowling pins. Before coming to Hawai'i, Tava was the lightweight boxing champion of French Polynesia. But more than a warrior and boxer, Tava is a cultural expert and teacher, generous in sharing his knowledge of the canoe and his native traditions. In the summer of 1995, I crewed with Tava on PVS's second voyaging canoe, *Hawai'iloa*, from Vancouver, B.C., to Juneau, Alaska. We were taking the canoe up the Inside Passage to bring her home to the Haida, Tlingit, and Tshimshian who had donated two spruce logs for her hulls. The canoe would stop at native villages on the way north and needed to perform at potlatches, so Tava taught us a dance of his Marquesan pig-god Makaiaanui, whom he identified with the Hawaiian pig-god Kamapua'a.

In 1999, I crewed with Tava again, as *Hōkūle'a* sailed interisland in the Marquesas, on her way to Rapanui. We visited a site on Ua Pou associated with Makaiaanui. Our guide told us a story about this god: during a famine, Makaiaanui swam over from Hiva Oa. (I had wondered why the pig dance Tava taught us in Alaska involved a swimming motion.) When Makaiaanui arrived on Ua Pou, his body was covered with aku, the fish having bitten onto the pig's bristles as he swam. The pig-god shook his body, and the aku fell off and fed the starving people. Then Makaiaanui went upland and sacrificed himself by entering an umu; when it was opened, the people were fed on his flesh.

As we sailed to Ua Huka, the next island stop after Ua Pou, Tava told me that the story we heard on Ua Pou explained the mana of pig bristles in catching aku. Aku lures in both Hawai‘i and the Marquesas have hog bristles on them. I had read that the bristles were attached to the lures to churn water like fins, making the lures look like the small fish as they were dragged behind a canoe, and that the two tufts of bristles at the barbed end kept the inner side up so the shell lure would lie flat on the surface of the sea to reflect sunlight. Tava's explanation revealed that the pig bristles also had a mythical significance.

One day when I picked up Tava at the Honolulu airport, I mentioned that I had visited some archaeological sites on Nukuhiva in 1993 with a University of Hawai‘i research team. He began talking about his ancestor Pakoko. I had read about Pakoko in Greg Dening's *Islands and Beaches*. According to Dening, in 1845, Pakoko, a chief, ordered the killing of six French soldiers who had trespassed on a kapu area, washing their clothes in a stream forbidden to them. One of the soldiers was sacrificed at a me‘ae (sacred temple) to Pakoko's god. Pakoko was imprisoned, tried, and executed by the French. He came to represent the spirit of native resistance to foreigners, and some of the natives of Nukuhiva believe thunder is a sign that Pakoko will return.

I was surprised when Tava told me Pakoko was his ancestor. His version of Pakoko's story, passed down through family oral tradition, was different from Dening's. Tava said Pakoko's daughter was raped by a French sailor when she visited a ship anchored at Tai‘ohae. Pakoko wanted her to cleanse herself in the blood of the Frenchman, so he captured the sailor, killed him at his me‘ae, cut off his head, and dumped the corpse in a stream. Downstream, he had positioned his daughter under a waterfall where the cleansing would take place.

In 1999, in Tai‘ohae, while we were on a break from doing maintenance work on *Hōkūle‘a*, Tava took us to visit the valley of Pakiu, where Pakoko had lived. We walked up a six-foot-wide stone-paved path, which led up a ridge to Mouake Pass, from where the path branched out across the central plateau to all parts of the island. Paepae (stone house foundations) lined the trail. A short way up, we stopped at the me‘ae where Pakoko had killed the Frenchman; it was being restored as a tourist attraction.

On the way down, Tava showed us the spot in the stream where Pakoko's daughter bathed herself in the blood of the sailor. There was a bitterness in Tava's voice whenever he spoke about the French. Later on, when we were at a picnic with some schoolchildren, Tava pointed out a cemetery at the eastern end of Tai‘ohae Bay where only whites were buried. He also told me that one of his ancestors was of Chinese ancestry; the Chinese had arrived in the Marquesas in the nineteenth century.

Hōkūle‘a was Tava's link to his past. In Hawai‘i, he was forced to use his

English, which was sometimes a phantasmagoric stream of words difficult to follow; at times I wondered if I really understood what he was telling me. In 1999, when we visited the Marquesas and met his family and childhood friends, he spoke fluidly in his native language. He seemed different, a man rooted, energetic and playful.

When we crewed together in Alaska, he was weakened by a nagging cold; we slept on the canoe on some chilly nights, which made it difficult for him to recover his health. Back in Hawai‘i, when we were on night watch on *Hōkūle‘a* below the cliffs of Kānehoalani in Kāne‘ohe Bay, he told me he was thinking of not voyaging anymore, of letting the young ones take over. But four years later, in his homeland, there was no talk about slowing down. He was rejuvenated, re-invigorated, like Antaeus, the ancient Greek Titan who regained his strength whenever he touched his Mother Earth.

When we left Tai‘ohae for Ua Pou, Tava’s cousin Lucien Kimitete, mayor of Tai‘ohae, chanted to Kanaloa to provide us safe passage. Lucien spoke with great deference to and respect for Tava and expressed a hope that one day, Tava would return to build a Marquesan canoe.

At the start of the 1992 voyage to Rarotonga, I was assigned to the crew that would deliver *Hōkūle‘a* to Hōnaunau, Hawai‘i, from where she would depart for her long voyage to Tahiti. Before this two-day sail across three channels, my only sailing experience was day-sails off Waikīkī. I had no idea what to expect.

Hōkūle‘a left Honolulu Harbor in the afternoon under the command of Captain Gordon Pi‘ianai‘a. A veteran of the first voyage of *Hōkūle‘a* in 1976, Gordon was known for his love of the canoe and voyaging, his calm demeanor in the roughest sea conditions, and his sharp wit. His father, Abe, was the first director of Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai‘i; Gordon held the same position at Kamehameha Schools.

Once *Hōkūle‘a* rounded Lae‘ahi, the wind came blasting along the southern coast at twenty-five to thirty knots, and the canoe went plunging at eight to ten knots through six- to eight-foot seas. Before I knew it, we were out in the Kaiwi channel between O‘ahu and Moloka‘i, heading southeast. I had never been out so far from the protection of land. “Honolulu” means “calm bay.” Protected from the trade wind swells by O‘ahu, Honolulu Harbor is truly lulu; out in the channels, the winds intensify; and the swells are higher, the water considerably rougher.

Hōkūle‘a surged ahead, close-hauled to the wind. Swells were breaking over the port bow of the heavily loaded canoe. As darkness fell we lost sight of Moloka‘i to the north. I had taken some seasickness medication and was drowsy – not much help with steering. My role was to operate the communication equipment, which included a single-side band radio and a computer capable of sending e-mail via the radio. A GPS unit was attached to the computer to send

position reports automatically so that schoolchildren in Hawai‘i could track the progress of the canoe as she sailed to Rarotonga and back via Tahiti. The voyage was called “No Nā Mamo, For the Sake of the Children” – a voyage dedicated to training a new generation of sailors and navigators and educating young children in Hawai‘i about the cultural traditions of Polynesia, as well as about the geography, meteorology, and oceanography of the Pacific. Nainoa’s mission was to get people to think about our special island home and what we needed to do to ensure her long-term health and well-being.

That night the clouds were thick and streaming fast overhead, with patches of sky and flickering stars appearing in the breaks. The swells came relentlessly at the canoe, with sheets of water shooting across the deck from the port bow or gushing up through the space between the deck and the starboard hull. I didn’t want to go into my canvas compartment, one of the five above each hull, for fear that I would become too seasick, so I stayed on deck, wet and cold. (The canvas compartments are not water-tight anyway, so those inside get wet, though not as wet as those on deck.) I was amazed at how much heat the body can lose on a wet, windy night at sea – the hypothermia could be deadly. I recalled a scene in *The Wind Gourd of La‘amaomao*: two malicious navigators, deprived of food, water, and protective covering by Kuapāka‘a on a stormy night at sea, fell off the canoe into the water and died. When I read the scene, I wondered how believable was that – could someone die from exposure in our supposedly warm tropical seas? The answer was yes.

Hōkūle‘a handled the large swells gracefully, surging up and down over them. The sensation was like flying. The ride was so smooth, I felt as if I was on the back of a huge bird gliding above the water. Later, crew member Eddie Kaanana, a fisherman from Miloli‘i, who was on crew with his fishing buddy Walter Paulo, told me that that night, he heard two heavy thuds that made the canoe shudder. Every now and then Captain Pi‘ianai‘a ordered us below to check the holds for water and to pump out any that had leaked in. We were taking on some water in the starboard stern through the lashings that held the ‘iako, or crossbeams, to the hull. But it was not enough to endanger the canoe if we pumped the water out regularly.

In between pumping the holds and dozing off on deck, I looked up at the sky to see if I could recognize the stars that Nainoa had taught us. Stars appeared and disappeared in the clouds overhead. The horizon was walled in by clouds, which makes navigation by rising and setting points impossible, though you could hold a course by the directions of the wind and swells, which are fairly stable in the Northeast Trade Wind Belt. We stayed close to the wind on a port tack.

Later a dim glow of lights appeared off the port side. Billy Richards, one of the watch captains and a veteran of the 1976 and 1985 voyages, told us it was Lāna‘i City. So we were passing that island, heading southeast. Gradually the winds dropped. John Kruse, the next watch captain and a veteran of the 1985 to 1987 voyage, said we were in the wind shadow of Lāna‘i. It was weird to

have been sailing through six- to eight-foot seas, then to be suddenly becalmed in the dark ocean. John was getting bored on his watch as he waited for the canoe to drift out of the wind shadow, so he decided to spin it in a circle by cranking the sixteen-foot steering paddle on its pivot. John is one of the most kolohe of the crew members. Once during a swimming test off Kawaihoa, his shorts appeared in his hands. He told everyone he was going to practice using them as a flotation device. Everyone swam quickly away from him. They knew he was about to take a shit.

After we drifted out past the wind line south of Lāna‘i, the canoe blazed onward past Kaho‘olawe in the dark and into the channel between Maui and Hawai‘i, called ‘Alenuihāhā – big swells smashing. The channel is aptly named: when the trade winds are up, the winds and swells barrel through the relatively narrow seas between the two island. When the current is going in the opposite direction from the wind and swells, the waves get steep and dangerous. We were well south of the narrowest and most dangerous part of the channel, but all through the night, the swells kept pounding over the port bow.

By mid-morning we were becalmed in the wind shadow of the Big Island, an area of smooth seas off the Kona Coast, where the winds are blocked by the massive volcanoes of Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, and Hualālai. This was the proverbial “Ke kai malino o Kona” – the calm seas of Kona.

During the night *Hōkūle‘a* had traveled so swiftly in the brisk winds, we lost our slower escort boat, the ketch *Kamahele*. I used the emergency GPS unit to get the latitude and longitude of the canoe, and radioed it back to Honolulu. They passed it on to Alex Jakubenko, captain of the escort boat. Alex motored up to us and began towing us toward Hōnaunau. In ancient times, we would have had to paddle the canoe across the calm seas.

This first voyage was a revelation – I learned more about the winds and seas of Hawai‘i than I had in my twenty years of schooling here. Years later, after having sailed between all the major islands and around O‘ahu, Lāna‘i, Moloka‘i, and Maui, I understood clearly how difficult it was to travel among the islands before airplanes and prop-driven boats were introduced, as well as why canoes, navigators, and knowledge of the winds and seas and the arts of wayfinding were so highly valued.

Today navigation involves a push of a button on a GPS unit, the planet mapped under a grid of latitude and longitude lines, with 0 degrees longitude running through Greenwich, England.

Later during the 1992 voyage, to help carry out the education program we had designed, I was assigned to the crew for the short second leg, from Tahiti to Ra‘iātea. (My interest was in the educational aspect rather than in becoming a crew member on one of the long voyages.)

We flew to Tahiti and spent a week doing repairs and maintenance work

on *Hōkūle'a* in Tautira, a small village where the families have cared for the canoe and hosted the crew since 1980. Once the canoe was ready, we departed for the island of Huahine, 150 miles west-northwest of Tahiti. On this sail, the canoe was navigated for the first time by Keahi Omai, a young former U.S. Army Ranger who was rediscovering his island roots as one of the young apprentice navigators training for a long voyage. He back-sighted on the peak of Maire-nui above Tautira for most of the day, keeping it dead astern. The sky was clear – a perfect night for navigation. As evening fell, Hōkūle'a (Arcturus) and Hikianalia (Spica) were guides, setting ahead of the canoe. Later Keahi oriented the canoe to Kamailemua and Kamailehope (Alpha and Beta Centauri) setting on the port beam. Two swells from the northeast and one from the southeast helped him keep the canoe on track. For confirmation of the canoe's heading, he waited for the appearance of the constellation 'Iwakeli'i (Cassiopeia), which he expected to rise off the starboard beam. The constellation appeared. Later a whole set of navigation stars called Ke Kā o Makali'i ("The Canoe Bailer of Makali'i") rose in the east behind the canoe. While these stars were rising, Keahi sighted Huahine faint in the moonlight in the direction pointed out by Nainoa. Before sunrise he also saw in the light refracted over the eastern horizon the outline of the island of Tahiti, which had already disappeared from view.

I steered the canoe for the first time that night, on the two a.m. to six a.m. watch. Kiki Mookini was on my watch, along with Brickwood Galuteria, a musician and TV and radio host, and Gil Ane, a former footaball player and pro wrestler whom I first saw on TV on *50th State Wrestling* in the 1950s. Gil had been in charge of the drydock of *Hōkūle'a* before the voyage. Also on the crew was Tiger Espere, whom I remembered from a full-page color photo in *Surfer* magazine in the 1960s: he was ripping down a fifteen-foot wave at Paumalū. Since then, he had tattooed his shoulders, back, chest, and biceps.

The winds were light, but steering a twelve-ton canoe downwind was not easy. The two sails were deployed wing and wing – one to either side of the canoe. The canoe lurched from side to side as the swells rolled beneath her and the steering paddle kicked against our bodies as we tried to hold it steady. Three times the sails luffed, then jibed. I could see why Nainoa wanted expert steersmen on the long voyages… jibing slows the canoe down, making his dead reckoning more difficult. I've seen an experienced steersman on *Hōkūle'a* keep the canoe moving ahead in light winds, following invisible, wavering breaths of air. The steersman feels the wind on his face and body and watches carefully its comings and goings in the shape of the sails, in the rippling footprints on the surface of the sea.

In the morning, the green hills of Huahine were dead ahead of the canoe – and navigation without instruments became a reality for me.

Visible across an eighteen-mile-wide channel from Huahine is the island

Raʻiātea, anciently called Havaiʻi, the homeland from which Hawaiʻi got its name. On this island, in the district of Opoa, Hiroa tells us, "The priests … gathered the warp of myth and the weft of history together and wove them into the textile of theology." The general pattern of chiefly Polynesian religion was formulated there, with a Sky father (Ātea or Wākea) and an Earth mother (Papa) giving birth to children who were assigned special functions: Tāne, or Kāne, forestry and craftsmanship; Tū or Kū, war; Roʻo, or Lono, peace and agriculture; Taʻaroa, or Kanaloa, marine affairs and fishing; and Raʻa, or Laʻa, wind and weather. In the district of Opoa, around the marae of Taputapuātea, houses of learning were established, where scholars could study religion, genealogies, heraldry, and oratory, as well as astronomy, geography, and navigation.

From this island in central Polynesia, aliʻi culture was carried abroad on voyaging canoes by explorers, settlers, and warriors – west to the Cook Islands and Aotearoa; south to the Australs and Rapa; east to Tuamotu, Nukuhiva, Hiva Oa, Mangareva, and Rapanui; and north to Hawaiʻi.

On the morning of September 17, 1992, *Hōkūleʻa* sailed from Huahine to Raʻiātea, and after a ceremonial greeting at the marae of Taputapuātea, a meeting of navigators took place in the cafeteria of the community center at Opoa, where the crew was housed near the marae. Four navigators from Hawaiʻi, seven from the Cook Islands, and one from New Zealand, all trained by the master Mau Piailug and his students Nainoa and Shorty Bertelmann, presented their sail plans and course strategies for voyages they were about to make or had already made. The meeting was a way of showing Mau that the knowledge he had planted had taken root, branched, leafed, flowered, and was now bearing fruit.

In *Vikings of the Pacific*, Hiroa describes his visit to Taputapuātea in 1929 on a Bishop Museum expedition. There at the untended ruins he lamented the loss of a "living spirit and divine courage that existed in ancient times":

> …something that we Polynesians have lost and cannnot find, something that we yearn for and cannot recreate. The backgrond in which that spirit was engendered has changed beyond recovery. The bleak wind of oblivion had swept over Opoa.

But after seventeen years of voyaging in modern times, the navigators and crew members of *Hōkūleʻa* had come to celebrate the revival of that spirit and courage.

What struck me about the activities and events surrounding *Hōkūleʻa* was the sense of the continuity of Polynesian history among the participants of the voyage. As *Hōkūleʻa* sailed, she was not only creating a modern story of rediscovery; she was drawn into a web of ancient stories, still alive in

oral traditions and folklore, threads of memory linking together the scattered islands of Polynesia. In "The Seekers," Herb Kāne shares some stories surrounding *Hōkūleʻa*'s 1985 visit to Raʻiātea. He tells of a kupuna (elder) on Moʻorea who foresaw the canoe's arrival and who believed that the canoe represented the return of people who had left the island of Raʻiātea many centuries ago. The central figures in Kāne's narrative are two Hawaiian kūpuna searching for this ancestral connection, symbolized by a powerful drum, seen in a dream, a drum that had been silenced when Polynesia was colonized by European and American powers. *Hōkūleʻa*'s visit to Taputapuātea provides the climax to Kāne's story and the continuation of the ancient story. The return of the descendants lifted a kapu on the sacred pass through the reef and enabled the ancestral drum to sound once again.

The revival of voyaging traditions and ancient histories was an important part of the renaissance of Hawaiian language and culture in the last quarter of the twentieth century. For the kānaka maoli community, voyaging was more than just scientific research into the past, or a subject about which to write scholarly papers. What was important was the connection between what the crew was doing today and what their ancestors had done. Kāne writes: "You know how the past merges with the present in the telling of some Polynesian legends. Whether something happened a thousand years ago or yesterday makes no difference, the Polynesian is merely the living edge of that great body of ancestral spirits – all the countless lives that have been lived before. The events of their lives are part of his life; he feels that he has participated."

Through voyaging, crew members have found a way to rediscover traditional values and practices. The voyages serve as rites of passage, allowing participants to step through a window of time into the ancient world, to be invigorated and inspired by ancestral spirits before returning home with a vision of how to live well and serve their community.

The difference between how haoles see *Hōkūleʻa* and how the kānaka maoli community sees her became clear to me when a brochure of the Hawaiʻi Maritime Center, which now "owns" *Hōkūleʻa*, referred to her as a "cultural artifact." For the crew, the canoe is not an artifact or a possession, but a living person, imbued with mana, an illustrious elder of the family. Voyaging is not something of the past to be analyzed by science; it is living history. These conflicting views were present from the very beginning of *Hōkūleʻa*'s voyaging and were partly responsible in the well-publicized fisticuffs on the first voyage.

Each voyage is a project through which kānaka maoli take back control of their history from Western scholars. This is understood and accepted, so conflicts have been minimized: Tommy Holmes and Dr. Ben Finney, two of the three original founders of PVS, stepped back to serve as consultants and allowed the kānaka maoli community to take leadership. But non-Hawaiians were not excluded from participation under Nainoa and his father's leadership; the knowledge and experience were open to all who wanted to learn and

were willing to serve the canoe through the long months of maintenance and drydock between voyages, and, after voyaging, to give back to the community through education programs.

By 1996, Nainoa felt the PVS was ready to take on the most difficult and challenging migration route in Polynesia: from Mangareva to Rapanui. He began planning for the voyage and studying the weather, ocean currents, star patterns, and locations of islands along the route.

The success of this voyage seemed improbable. Some warned against it, thinking it was too risky; certainly, the navigation would be much more difficult than on earlier voyages. Rapanui is a very small target, thirteen miles long and eleven miles wide – about half the size of the island of Lānaʻi. Its highest point is the 1,674-foot-high extinct volcano, Terevaka. To see an island this low from the sea, a vessel would have to sail within thirty miles of it during daylight hours, in clear weather. By comparison, Mauna Kea on the island of Hawaiʻi, eight times higher than Terevaka, can be seen from more than one hundred miles away on a clear day.

Rapanui is not only small, but isolated, not part of a chain of islands like Tahiti or Hawaiʻi so that even if the navigator misses the targeted island, he is likely to see an island in the vicinity. In past voyages, Nainoa had targeted screens of islands between 150 to 450 miles wide. But the closest island to Rapanui was 800 miles from it. So Nainoa had to design a sailing strategy to get *Hōkūleʻa* within thirty miles of Rapanui from a starting point 1,450 miles away, with little margin for error.

Another challenge: Rapanui lies in a zone of variable winds, with easterlies prevailing. To tack against such winds to Rapanui would be tedious and slow, making dead reckoning difficult.

Then, too, traditional navigators used land-based seabirds to find islands. Once Rapanui had a thriving population of seabirds. In 1934-35, while conducting research on the island, Alfred Metraux reported gray, white, noddy, and gray-backed terns, as well as boobies, tropic birds, and frigates. But a hawk introduced to the island to control the rat population has reduced the seabird population as well. So this traditional land-finding technique was no longer available to Nainoa and his crew.

Inspired by the challenge, Nainoa designed a strategy to find Rapanui from Mangareva, from where oral traditions suggest the first settlers to Rapanui came. The voyage was planned for the end of winter and early spring in the southern hemisphere (September-October), when late winter storms around Antarctica occasionally break down the easterly trade winds, bringing wind shifts that could help the voyagers sail east without tacking. But the crew couldn't count on these winds, so the plan was to ride whatever winds were available, tacking between 23 and 31 degrees south to get within 300 miles of Rapanui. Nainoa's hand measurements of the altitudes of stars crossing the

meridian were accurate enough to allow him to stay within these latitudes.

Between Mangareva and Rapanui are three islands that could be used as guideposts: Pitcairn, Henderson, and Ducie Atoll. Sighting any of these islands would give the navigators an exact fix on location, from which to reorient *Hōkūle'a* toward Rapanui. Once within 300 miles of Rapanui, the crew would narrow the range of their search to between 25 and 29 degrees latitude, tacking north and south to look for the island. The tacks would have to be close enough together so that the canoe would not sail past the island without seeing it. During this search, the crew would have to stop sailing at night.

Even with this well thought-out plan, success didn't seem likely. The search area was about 72,000 square miles. Was it possible to find a small island in that great of an expanse while navigating without instruments? I was skeptical, but had learned never to underestimate Nainoa's mana.

Nainoa placed a time limit on how long the crew would search for the island – thirty-five to forty days, after which fatigue might become a safety issue. While the goal of reaching the island was important, safety was even more important; Nainoa told the crew the value of the voyage was in the process of planning; preparing; studying the weather, ocean currents, and stars; and taking on the challenge to get there. Even failing to reach the island would have taught them a great deal about how the island might have been reached in ancient times. He didn't have to prove that Polynesians had reached the island: it was populated for many centuries before Dutch explorer Roggeveen showed up there on Easter Sunday in 1722.

Given the prevailing winds and currents, it was highly unlikely, if not impossible, that the original settlers had drifted there. An oral tradition of Hotu Matua, the first settler of the island, says that the island was seen in a dream by a man named Hau Maka, who gave the following sailing directions for getting there:

> I luna (upwind)
> E tau (it juts up)
> E revareva ro a (a permanent contour)
> It roto in te raa (in the midst of the sun)

Rapanui lay upwind, in the direction of the rising sun, from Mangareva (Barthel).

Nainoa selected eleven of his best sailors and navigators to make the voyage. In mid-September the crew gathered on Mangareva to wait for winds that would give them a lift toward Rapanui. On September 22, they left on northerly winds that allowed them to sail east toward Pitcairn. On September 24, they sighted Pitcairn. At the start of the voyage, Nainoa was feeling out of practice, but finding Pitcairn gave him confidence. With the favorable winds, the crew should have kept going, but Polynesian protocol is such that it would be an insult to sail past the island without stopping to acknowledge its people,

especially since the canoe had stopped there on the way to Mangareva from Hiva Oa and was warmly greeted by the islanders. The crew went ashore.

After a few hours on island, where gifts were exchanged, and with the north winds strengthening, the canoe departed in the night. For the next five days, the crew sailed straight at Rapanui, deciding not to look for Henderson or Ducie, which would have slowed their progress eastward.

On October 1, the northerly winds died out and the winds became weak and variable. The crew continued to work east. By October 3, after eleven days, they were already within 300 miles of Rapanui, though a little north of the search area designated by Nainoa. When the winds shifted easterly, the crew tacked for four days. By October 7, they were within 150 miles of Rapanui, with the wind strengthening out of the east. Should they tack north or south? Tacking north would take them a little westward, away from Rapanui. From his latitude measurements, Nainoa was relatively sure they were still north of the island, so they went south to gain more easting.

At sunrise on October 8, 1999, Max Yarawamai, a nephew of Mau's, was at the bow on watch. He reported a faint black line visible through one of two holes in the wall of clouds at the horizon. Navigator Blankenfeld told him to keep watching it – it could be just a dark cloud. Max kept his eye on the line. The speck did not move or disappear – it was a "permanent contour" where the dawn sky met the sea. Nainoa was at the back of the canoe with navigator Chad Baybayan, scanning the western horizon to make sure they hadn't sailed past the island in the night. They were in disbelief over Max's claim. Could they have found the island on the first pass? Nainoa was expecting to see the pyramid-shaped Mt. Teravaka, not a flat line. He went forward to check out the island that Max said was there. He climbed the mast. The line remained. It was the coastal plain of southern end of the island. The canoe tacked toward the island and landed the next day, completing an incredible eighteen-day voyage to the most remote and isolated island in Polynesia.

Nainoa explains the success of the voyage by saying that his grandmother was with him in spirit all the way, and the rest of the crew, including Tava, felt their own ancestral spirits guiding them along. Furthermore, the crew noted, after twenty-five years of voyaging, *Hōkūle'a* had acquired a mana of her own. They felt as if *Hōkūle'a* found Rapanui. They were on the canoe to serve her and the community she represented; they were there to raise the sails and steer, but they depended on her mana to get them where they wanted to go. In Polynesian tradition, the canoe is a seabird, a living being who can find her way over vast expanses of ocean and bring her crew home.

Nainoa's mana of leadership, nurtured by his parents and grandparents, also needs to be recognized: his ability to plan and strategize; his attention to detail; his intense concentration on and dedication to studying, preparing, and training; his patience with the weather; and his concern for the safety of his crew. What drove it all was a vision and the will to carry out the vision after he had committed himself to it.

Initially Nainoa saw voyaging as a way to revive the ancient spirit of Polynesia and kānaka maoli culture; today he sees it as a way to shape the future of Hawai'i and the world. He speaks about the disturbing trends in contemporary society – the rapid increases in population, consumption, and pollution and the depletion of non-renewable resources. He looks to his ancestors for guidance.

What brought the contemporary environmental crisis home for him was PVS's failure to find in the forests of Hawai'i koa logs large enough to build a voyaging canoe out of traditional materials. (*Hōkūle'a*'s twin hulls were constructed from plywood and fiberglass to meet a two-year deadline for the 1976 voyage; building a canoe from native materials would have taken PVS much longer than two years.) In 1990, at the start of the project to build a second voyaging canoe using traditional materials, a nine-month search for koa logs led to the discovery that the giant trees that had once been shaped into the hulls of voyaging canoes were gone; the native forest were devastated by over 200 years of logging, ranching, and agriculture. Two spruce logs were donated by the natives of Southeast Alaska to allow the project to continue.

To read about a global environmental crisis is one thing; to discover the trees in the forests of one's ancestral homeland are gone is another. Nainoa realized that the revival of traditional culture depended on native flora and fauna flourishing in a healthy environment, and that Hawai'i, despite its fairly healthy appearance and the abundance of greenery, had lost much of its native forests. What was left was at risk.

To work for restoration of what had been lost, Nainoa established an initiative called Mālama Hawai'i, "Caring for Hawai'i," rooted in traditions of taking care of the land and sea as sacred parents. Protecting, conserving, and sharing what keeps us alive are essential to survival of people on a canoe, on an island, on a continent, and on a planet. These values represented the antithesis of values promoted by capitalism – competition, acquisition, and conspicuous consumption.

Nainoa sees an important role for Hawai'i and kānaka maoli culture in bringing about changes in global values: "First, we are islanders and understand the limited resources of our island home; and second, we have a strong link to our native heritage. Native people throughout the world believe that the natural environment is sacred and that they must live in balance with it to survive." In this interview with his cousin Sam Low, Nainoa describes the new vision and mission of PVS:

> The task for the Voyaging Society in the new millennium is to find a new context in which our voyaging heritage and our canoes play a vital role in education to build a bridge between the values of the past and the needs of the future. Mālama Hawai'i will look back at where we've come from, where we are today, where we're going. It's about learning

and stewardship. It's about caring for the ocean, our coastlines, our coral reefs, our precious islands.

Beneath the specific lessons we have learned about navigation and voyaging in the last twenty-five years, we have discovered values that can guide our journey into the future. Our ancestors sailed across a vast ocean, one third of the earth's surface, and to accomplish this great feat they needed the vision to see islands over the horizon, the ability to plan intentional voyages of discovery, the discipline to train physically and mentally, the courage to take risks, and a deep sense of aloha to bind the crew together during the voyage. These are Hawaiian values but they are also universal values. They worked in the past and they will work today.

Nainoa is the first to admit he doesn't have specific answers for creating a healthy future for Hawai'i or the planet, but he is asking the right question and realizes that the key to reversing destructive trends in contemporary society is a change in values. If the values of his ancestral culture can steer society away from consumerism and toward a less materialistic way of life, perhaps there is a chance for change. It will take much more than organizing beach clean-ups and recycling projects to create a sustainable future. We need to start asking how much of this waste we ourselves are creating in our daily lives, and how much of what we buy, consume, and dump is really necessary for living well.

As the fame of *Hōkūle'a* and her voyagers have grown, so has her attraction for those who want to profit from her. Hawai'i's tourism industry uses the image of the voyaging canoe to enhance the romantic appeal of the islands. A visitor to PVS's website (set up as a public service to educate the public about voyaging) e-mailed me about his wish to sail on a voyaging canoe. He was willing to pay. He suggested that offering rides to the public would be a great way to make money to support the maintenance of the canoe and to fund future voyages and education projects. True. But while PVS is always in need of funds, it has never supported the idea of selling rides on *Hōkūle'a* to tourists; the canoe must continue to support the unfulfilled cultural and educational needs of Hawai'i's people.

A *San Francisco Examiner* travel writer, describing his search for a voyaging canoe to ride, notes: "Cadging a ride on one of these canoes is just about impossible – believe me I tried…." It's comforting to know that not everything in this world can be bought. On the other hand, the writer did manage to find a small coastal canoe, built from koa wood, that was selling rides at one of the hotels on the Kona Coast of Hawai'i.

At a curriculum meeting at Kapi'olani Community College in 1995, I suggested to some instructors in the humanities department that world civilizations,

a two-semester sequence taught in history and required for graduation, be modified to include the story of the migrations and achievements of Hawaiian and other Oceanic peoples, to honor the ancestors of over twenty percent of the population our college serves. The first semester could cover human origins and migrations out of Africa and across continents, with the establishment of cities, states, and empires in Asia, Europe, and America. Toward the end of this expansion across continents, at the southeastern edges of Asia, fishermen, explorers, and traders ventured out into the Pacific Ocean and discovered its myriad islands – among the last places on the planet to be settled, because they were so remote and difficult to reach. On these small islands, the settlers developed arts and sciences adapted to their oceanic environment.

The second semester could describe the development of nations in Europe; the rise of capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism; the carving up of the globe by colonial powers; and the response of indigenous peoples to the European onslaught. Students of Hawai‘i need to know the origins and history of the kānaka maoli in the context of world history in order to understand the community and place they live in.

To my proposal for a world history inclusive of local and regional history, the chair of the humanities department, a history teacher who grew up in Hawai‘i, responded smugly, in a pompous voice lacking irony, that courses called “World Civilizations” couldn’t include Hawaiians and Polynesians because they haven’t contributed anything to world civilization. I was surprised (though I shouldn’t have been) by her ignorance and disrespect.

Other scholars justified excluding Hawai‘i and Oceania from world history by claiming that history and civilization began with writing and that since there had been no writing in the Pacific, there was no history or civilization. I thought the discipline had moved beyond that, that the study of the human past now drew information from both oral and written sources, as well as artifacts and archaeological sites. Why not include in world history the exploration of earth’s largest ocean and the human settlement of its islands? Why not include the Hawaiian and Polynesian achievements in canoe-building, navigation, agriculture, and aquaculture; their oral and performing arts (dance, chant, genealogy, storytelling, riddling, and oratory); their exquisite house-making, wood and stone carving, feather-work, fiber- and leaf-weaving, kapa-making; not to mention ways of living healthily on small islands. It wasn’t as if the people of the Pacific had been sitting on their asses doing nothing before Europeans arrived in sailing ships, with pens and paper in hand. (“What! Another of those damned fat, square, thick books! Always scribble, scribble, scribble, eh, Mr. Gibbon?”)

Once kānaka maoli and other indigenous people of the Pacific were introduced to writing in the nineteenth century, they recorded their history and traditions, producing copious texts for scholarly study.

In the study of small islands like Nauru, Rapanui, Mangaia, and Hawai‘i are lessons as important for the people of Hawai‘i as lessons drawn from the

study of continental societies (McDaniel and Gowdy). But I could tell by my colleague's tone of voice that she wasn't open to changing her views about Hawai'i and Oceania. Like so many other colonials, she had been educated to believe that her home was "an area of darkness" and the community that paid her salary was culturally insignificant and in need of enlightenment from European and other civilizations.

In 2001, the University of Hawai'i implemented two new graduation requirements to promote the study of our home islands and ancestral homelands in Asia and the Pacific. A two-semester sequence of courses called "Global and Multicultural Perspectives" replaced the two-semester world civilizations requirement. To fulfill the new requirement, the courses have to include "a component" on the indigenous cultures of Hawai'i, Oceania, and Asia. Students are also required to take a third course that examines the intersection of kānaka maoli culture with Pacific Islands and/or Asian cultures.

With these new graduation requirements, the university accepted responsibility for promoting and perpetuating the study of Hawaiian culture in its homeland and for fostering multicultural respect and understanding among the diverse people who make up its community. The university administration and Board of Regents also wanted to train employees for the tourism industry, which hopes to attract more visitors by promoting Hawai'i's native culture, and to prepare students to do business in Oceania and Asia, so America can continue to spread the gospel of capitalism and tourism westward. Whatever the motivations for these new graduation requirements, the chair of the humanities department who told me that she couldn't and wouldn't include Hawaiian and Oceanic history and culture in her world civilizations courses now had to change her courses to include them. It struck me as both funny and pathetic that some of the faculty here had to be forced to teach history as if this place and community mattered.

But complying with a requirement can be half-hearted and perfunctory by those who lack an understanding of, or don't accept, the vision behind the requirement. For such faculty, the new Global and Multicultural Perspectives requirement did not mean rethinking their approach to teaching world history; they proposed simply to tack onto their old course outlines one 75-minute lecture per semester about the indigenous peoples and cultures of Hawai'i and the Pacific.

Sanctuary

Westward of the main Hawaiian Islands stretches a chain of ten small islands, atolls, sand bars, shoals, and reefs. Much older than the main islands, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) are setting into the sea: beyond the last island, Kure, 1,200 miles west of Kauaʻi, are a chain of sea mounts already submerged.

In 1909, eight of the NWHI were declared a Bird Reservation by the U.S. government to protect nesting seabirds from slaughter by poachers from Japan (seabird feathers were once popular in hats). In 1946, the reservation was renamed the NWHI National Wildlife Refuge. In 1981, the atoll of Kure was designated a State of Hawaiʻi Seabird Sanctuary. In 1988, in anticipation of the closure of a U.S. Naval Station, Midway was designated as a National Wildlife Refuge as well. Today, about ninety percent of the seabird population of Hawaiʻi nests on these islands. They are also the primary breeding grounds for the threatened Hawaiian green sea turtle and the endangered Hawaiian monk seal.

In 2000, I visited the NWHI as a member of an education and media team attached to an ecological assessment expedition. Using computers, digital photography, and satellite phones, we sent out daily press releases, journal reports, and photos, which were posted on a Bishop Museum website. The idea for the project came from ʻAulani Wilhelm, a public information officer for the Hawaiʻi Department of Land and Natural Resources. A passionate conservationist, ʻAulani wanted the expedition to do more than produce scientific studies; she believed it should also educate the public about the issues surrounding the future of the islands, which included the possibility of designating them a National Marine Sanctuary (the marine equivalent of a national park), so that a coherent and comprehensive plan could be developed to regulate human activities there and to protect the islands and coral reefs from contamination and destruction and preserve them as much as possible in their natural state.

The research vessel *Rapture* departed Honolulu Harbor on an afternoon in mid-September, at the end of the hurricane season and before the start of the season of winter storms. As we approached Nihoa the next morning, signs of its abundant wildlife began to appear: schools of needle-fish swimming near the surface, small aku jumping, boobies and terns flying low over the ocean, and higher up, ʻiwa (frigate birds) soaring. As we were anchoring on the south side of the island, we saw a group of about fifteen monk seals sunning

themselves on the island's only beach – thirty yards of sand on the west side of Adam's Bay. Another seal was swimming off the port side of the ship. The main breeding grounds of these seals are the atolls to the west, but a colony lives on Nihoa.

In the nineteenth century the seals were hunted to near extinction for their pelts and oil. After the NWHI Bird Reservation was created, the seal population recovered somewhat. But human activities around the breeding grounds at Midway and French Frigate Shoals during World War II (airfields were built on these atolls) caused the population to fall again. After the war, the number of seals fluctuated, not recovering, so they were declared an endangered species and given protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1976. A decline in the 1980s was attributed variously to climate or environmental changes, commercial fishing, overpopulation, and mobbing of females and juveniles by males trying to mate. The population stabilized in the 1990s. Today the number of seals is estimated at 1,200-1,500.

After we anchored, the marine scientists on board went scuba diving to survey the marine flora and fauna around Nihoa. The expedition videographer, Cal Hirai, brought back some footage of a monk seal at the sea bottom just below the ship. The pup was curious and playful, a big underwater puppy swimming up to the camera and peering into it with its large eyes. It swam away a couple of times to chase off another seal, then returned to the camera. (The seals' closest land relatives are dogs and bears, and however cute seals might appear, like their relatives, they pack a dangerous bite.)

From the sea, Nihoa looks like a jagged molar, with vertical cliffs on its east, north, and west sides; the south side slopes down to a rocky coast. Rainwater has eroded five ravines into this slope. Except for the light green leaves of loulu palms in the central and eastern ravines, the island looked mostly brown. Access to the 170-acre island is restricted to those with landing permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Two scientists, Beth Flint and Gordon Nishida, were already on the island when we arrived, dropped off twelve days earlier by another research ship, which was traveling up the NWHI to videotape the ocean bottom in order to locate possible underwater survey sites for the marine scientists on *Rapture*. Beth, a bird expert with Fish and Wildlife, was there to check on the avian populations. Nihoa has two species of birds found only there: a small gray-brown and white millerbird and a yellow-headed, gray-backed finch. Gordon, with the Bishop Museum, was surveying bug populations. Several bugs are endemic to the island, including a large orange and black spider, a large cricket, and a huge katydid.

The next day, as the marine survey continued, the education team landed with

Beth and Gordon at a small cove on the southern coast. The zodiac nosed up onto a rocky ledge with the gentle sea surge, and one after another, we jumped up onto the rocks. When the surge began sucking the boat backward, the captain reversed, then came back in with the next surge. The zodiac crew passed our supplies to us. In rough weather landing would be very dangerous, if not impossible.

Once on shore, we donned new clothing, shoes, and hats, frozen for forty-eight hours back home before we left in order to reduce the possibility of introducing seeds of alien species of plants, or small insects or their eggs. We also carried buckets containing a dozen or so young petrels that had landed on *Rapture* the night before, attracted by its lights. Beth placed the fledglings gently into rock crevices above the landing site.

Beth and Gordon told us that the native plants and birds are relatively intact on Nihoa, but there are lots of alien insects, many brought by humans before strict protocols for access were adopted in 1990. The two scientists were concerned about the effects of these alien species on the endemic flora and fauna. The environment of such a small island (190 acres) is very limited and fragile, and the small populations of endemic species are just a toehold away from extinction.

At the trail head to East Palm Valley, we spotted the millerbird. Beth estimates their number to be between 100 and 200. Before we headed up the trail, she warned us to watch where we stepped, as there were baby noddies on the ground and baby shearwaters and petrels in burrows. Stepping on a burrow might crush the babies inside. Also, if we got too close to a noddy sitting protectively on an egg or a chick, the mother might be frightened off, and without the shade of her body, the egg or chick might fry in the intense sun heat.

Plant life was more robust than it appeared from the sea; three hardy native species grew close to the ground – bunch grass, ʻohai, and ʻilima. As we made our way over the steep rocky ground, there were birds everywhere, flying overhead, perching on stones and low shrubs, sitting on the ground, peering out from burrows. We saw a chick emerging from an eggshell and corpses of adult birds in various states of decay. (When a bird dies, its flesh is consumed by crickets and earwigs, then its feathers and bones are weathered by the sun, rain, and wind into nutrients for plants.)

Gordon and Beth pointed out agricultural terraces on the slope above us. Between 1000 and 1500 A.D., Nihoa was inhabited by kānaka maoli. About thirty house sites, fifteen bluff shelters, fifteen sites of worship, and twenty-eight agricultural terraces have been identified on the island. Archaeologists surmise that sweet potato was grown, and the twelve to sixteen acres under cultivation might have supported about one hundred people. Various artifacts have also been collected, including fishhooks, sinkers, cowry

shell lures, hammer stones, grindstones, adzes, and coral rubbing stones. The archaeological remains indicate permanent or semi-permanent settlement, as do two burial sites. Bones of adults and children were taken off the island by the Bishop Museum in 1924.

We hiked past a still usable cave shelter, with a low wall across the front, then another wall, expertly built, still standing after centuries of weathering. At East Palm Valley, atop a fifteen-foot rock cliff white with guano, amid loulu palms and ʻilima and ʻohai, were more walls – formerly house sites. On top of one of the walls just behind us, two pairs of two-foot-high pointed basalt rocks were placed upright, like pairs of wings. To the east were agricultural terraces along a steep slope, where rain run-off might have watered the crops. We saw caves toward the southeast end of the island.

While the rest of the team continued up the slope to the summit to look over the sheer cliffs on the north side of the island, I remained behind to rest under the shade of loulu palms, still weak from a bout of seasickness the day before. It was eerie – sitting near these long-abandoned sites. A human presence lingers, yet no people. A cool sea breeze was blowing up the ravine, and a squall was passing the island to the south, dropping its rain into the sea.

Why did the inhabitants of these house sites and shelters come to Nihoa? Perhaps to fish or gather bird eggs and feathers. David Malo notes that the black and gray feathers of the ʻiwa (frigate bird) were collected at this island and at Kaʻula, a small rock island southwest of Niʻihau. Red feathers were particularly coveted for making sacred objects, and the koʻae ʻula, or red-tailed tropic bird, nests on Nihoa. Polynesians traveled great distances to obtain red feathers or objects made from them: one Marquesan tradition tells of a 1,200-mile voyage, from Hiva Oa to Rarotonga, to obtain the red feathers of a kura bird; and the voyaging chief Hema is said to have sailed home from Hawaiʻi to Tahiti to obtain a girdle of red feathers for his son Kahaʻi.

A tradition of Niʻihau recalls that people went to Nihoa also to collect loulu palm wood for spears and a grass called Makiukiu, which could be used for cordage and stuffing (Tava and Keale).

Why were the islands abandoned after around 1500 A.D.? Perhaps a period of drought made life too difficult to sustain on the island. According to a tradition of Niʻihau, a spring called Waiakanohoaka provided good, sweet water, but it hasn't been found. Only three seeps of water are known, all contaminated with guano. The freshwater on the island comes from an estimated twenty to thirty inches of rain that falls annually from passing squalls and fronts. (By contrast, upper Mānoa valley on Oʻahu gets 160 inches of rain a year; Mount Waiʻaleʻale on Kauaʻi, the wettest spot on Earth, gets 400.)

After the others returned from their hike to the top of the island, Gordon pointed out an alien scale feeding on the leaves of the loulu palm. A ladybug alighted on my hand. ʻAulani asked if it was a native. Gordon said no, it probably flew here from the main Hawaiian Islands. How does it survive? It

feeds on other aliens like the scales, or aphids and white flies.

Back at the landing, we waited in the shade of the sea cliffs for our zodiac ride back to *Rapture*. Three monk seals were sunning themselves on the rocks below our perch.

About 180 miles west of Nihoa is the island of Mokumanamana, "Branching Island" or "Island of Great Spiritual Power." We left Nihoa at night and arrived at Mokumanamana at sunrise. As we anchored off the leeward side, the rocky bluffs of the island were stark against a sky lit up by the morning sun. Cumulus clouds and ʻiwa birds sailed toward us on the light trades above. The sea was glassy. Mokumanamana, like Nihoa, is the remnant of a volcanic rim. It is one-fourth the size of Nihoa and has little soil and no trees; five species of low shrubs cover the rocky ground in patches. There is even less groundwater here than on Nihoa.

We rode the zodiac toward West Cove, the landing site marked on the map. Large swells from a storm out past Midway were surging against the black volcanic rock. The zodiac captain decided to go around to the north side of the island and tuck into Shark Bay, which was protected from the swells. We found a rocky ledge for landing.

Beth was planning to do a quick walking survey of the bird population. Gordon wanted to collect insects, in particular, a species of beetle (*Rhyncogonus biformis*) found only on Mokumanamana. He planned to stay overnight on the island, alone, to collect this nocturnal beetle, which lives underground and comes out at night to feed on the leaves of a native plant called ʻaweoweo (*Chenopodium oahuense*). *Rhyncogonus* lives in very limited habitats and doesn't fly, yet varieties appear on the other islands of the Hawaiian chain. How did it get from island to island? Possibly clinging to birds or on pieces of wood drifting in the west-flowing currents.

We climbed a steep, rocky, 240-foot-high hill. Near the top, we saw the first of an astonishing thirty-three shrines probably built by kānaka maoli who sailed out from Kauaʻi, Niʻihau, or Nihoa. The shrines consist of stone pavements bordered by low rows of stones, and singular upright slabs, two to three feet high, along the back. The shrines seemed to be aligned east to west, facing north. Emory called them "marae" (Tahitian for shrines) because they resembled sites he had seen in Tahiti and the Tuamotu archipelago.

The absence of house and burial sites suggests the island was not permanently inhabited. There are rock shelters around the remoter cliffs of the islands. Fragments of human bone were found and taken to the Bishop Museum in 1924. Earlier, in 1894, stone figures were collected from the island. The figures are flat and neckless, with round faces; the eyes, noses, mouths, ears, and penises protrude. The name of the god or gods worshiped have been lost, but the name of the island suggests it was thought to possess great spiritual power. Its sudden appearance in the middle of the sea and its rocky

ground and soaring cliffs express this power. The numerous birds nesting and flying all over the island add to the feeling of great energy – bird life, if not human life, thrives here. My guess would be that the worship had to do with bird-gods and rain-gods (birds are metaphoric for rain clouds in chants) who bring in their cloud forms the life-giving rains from the western sea to the dry leeward coasts of the Hawaiian Islands during the season of Hoʻoilo.

ʻAulani handled the cultural protocol on the island, which included a chant and an offering of red salt at the first site. We walked around each site, having no reason to enter any.

As we hiked to the second hill along the central ridge, the birds ignored us, only squawking and flapping their wings if we got too close to their nests. Gordon was far ahead, going down a steep slope and up the next hill like a billy-goat, making the best of his less-than-a-day survey of the insect life. As he walked, he swung his net back and forth over plants, then sucked the insects captured into collection vials, using a vinyl tube around his neck. By the time we got to the second hill, Gordon was at the far end of the island. We stopped to rest before heading back. It was surprising to find styrofoam floats and plastic objects (empty disposable lighters, toys, bottle caps, toothbrushes) on the ground, apparently brought for nestlings by seabirds who thought the discarded odds and ends were food floating on the ocean surface. The beaches and reefs of the NWHI are littered with tons of debris from ships, boats, and shoreline development of continents and islands thousands of miles away.

On our way back to meet the zodiac, Beth and Cal discovered a wolf spider in a crevice; Cal videoed it. ʻAulani wanted to capture it for Gordon with a plastic bag. I thought she was nuts. Couldn't this spider be venomous? Couldn't it bite through a plastic bag? Luckily it escaped deeper into its hole.

Gordon's work brought back memories of my boyhood insect collection. I don't remember how I got the idea for the collection – perhaps from a how-to science book I borrowed from the library after one of my elementary school teachers encouraged us to make a collection for extra science credit. My father made a collection box for me: a rectangular wooden frame fitted with an old picture frame with glass and a block of styrofoam inside on which to pin my specimens. I began collecting insects and bugs, about thirty in all – monarch and cabbage butterflies, beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, dragonflies, and praying mantises. I included a scorpion that I found dead on the floor in our house. I avoided centipedes and spiders because of my great fear of them, even dead ones; and no cockroaches, which I thought were filthy and disgusting.

Later, in college, I developed a prejudice against science from reading Romantic poets and artists critical of the cold rationality of modern science. When I recalled my insect collection, it seemed to represent the bizarre way science relates to our fellow inhabitants of the earth. I wrote a poem titled "Order":

The fields seemed chaotic to him –
butterflies flitting among the flowers,
bees zinging by like bullets,
dragonflies zipping at crazy angles,
grasshoppers with springy legs
leaping out of reach.

He captured them, one kind at a time,
and put them in his death chamber –
a mayonnaise jar with a paper towel
soaked with Black Flag inside.
He watched each go frenzied, then wind down
like a little toy running out of spring;
when it was still; he spread it out to dry.
Then he impaled the soft corpse,
the small tension in the pin sending
an imaginary pain through his chest.
He placed each new specimen
in line with the last:
neat rows like cars in a parking lot.

Now watching Gordon and Beth survey and monitor the populations of bugs and birds I could see the importance of their work in understanding changes in our environment and providing the data needed to argue for protection of the biological heritage and diversity of the planet – environmental science aimed at controlling the excesses of science applied to exploiting the planet's resources.

Aboard *Rapture* the next morning, Gordon told us that the evening had been punctuated by rains squalls, with rain flying upward off the steep cliffs. He huddled near a rocky shelter in his rain poncho, then went out to do his nocturnal collecting. He captured the beetle he was looking for, as well as a spider and a centipede.

Our next stop was French Frigate Shoals, eighty miles to the west. As we approached the Shoals, we sighted a school of dolphins, then waves breaking, the first signs of land. The Shoals consist of a group of thirteen small islands scattered around submerged reefs and an eighteen-mile-wide lagoon. The islands are coral and sand, except for rocky La Perouse Pinnacle, a lonely remnant of the volcanic island that was once there.

On the way to the Shoals, Cal hooked a thirty-pound ono and gave it to the kitchen crew. As we prepared to drop anchor off Disappearing Island at the southern end of the Shoals, a huge school of ulua swam past the ship. That night the captain turned on flood lights at the stern to see what sea life it

would attract. A school of mālolo, or flying fish, surfaced out of the darkness, and right after them, three dolphins flashed by, feeding. A couple of scientists with nets scooped the brightly lit water for plankton. One captured a thrashing, transparent ribbon of life, about six inches long and half an inch wide, with two tiny black eyes at one end – a baby eel.

The next day the dive teams began their survey of the sea life in the lagoon, which contains fields of table-top coral (acropora) not found in the main Hawaiian Islands, though common in reefs in tropical waters around the world. We snorkeled off the boat and saw large schools of ulua cruising above the table-tops. The current was relatively strong – one to two knots; you could swam and remain in the same place next to the anchored boat. Diving with his camera, Cal spotted and videoed two females and one male of the rare masked angel fish in thirty-five feet of water. These angelfish are endemic to Hawai‘i but are rarely seen above 200 feet in the main Hawaiian Islands. The males have yellow masks and fins; the females black masks. Labeled “relics,” they have no close relatives elsewhere, suggesting they have inhabited the waters of the Hawaiian Islands for a very long time.

We went ashore on Tern Island for a two-day stay with the acting refuge manager, Tony Palermo, and two interns, recent college graduates. Nadya, from the North Shore of O‘ahu, was a forest recreation and resource management major at Oregon State; and Elaine, from New Mexico, was a biology major at UC San Diego. They had signed on for four-month stays to get some experience in conservation work. The Fish and Wildlife staff occupied the former Coast Guard Station and barracks, which were built off the ground and from concrete, to withstand hurricanes, tsunamis, and storm surf.

Tern Island was very different from Nihoa and Mokumanamana. No cliffs here. The highest natural feature is a dead ironwood tree. No ancient ruins either, though perhaps kānaka maoli had sailed out to these sand islands to gather turtles and turtle eggs, a common practice among Pacific Islanders. (The natives of Puluwat, in Micronesia, sail in the spring to the tiny, uninhabited island of Pikelot, one hundred miles to the northwest, to get turtles.)

In 1942, during World War II, the original six-acre sand spit of Tern Island was expanded to fifty-six acres to accommodate a 350-foot-wide, 3,100-foot-long aircraft runway, used for emergency landings and also to supply a station from which seaplanes flew on reconnaissance missions. After the navy left in 1946, the airstrip was used by commercial fishermen to fly their catches to Honolulu. In 1952, a Long-Range Navigation (LORAN) station operated by the Coast Guard was moved from nearby East Island to Tern Island. The station was closed down in 1979 after satellite navigation replaced LORAN. Then Fish and Wildlife took over.

Like Nihoa and Necker, Tern Island is home to frigate birds, boobies, tropic birds, terns, shearwaters, and petrels. Most of the quarter of a million birds that nest here in spring and summer were away when we landed, though the ones that had stayed behind created a constant din of screeches, squawks, clucks, and moans mingling with the sound of breaking surf. The musty odor of guano pervaded the humid air. "How's the smell of bird shit?" I laughed. "Not as bad as human shit," ʻAulani replied. "Yeah, we are the ultimate pests." And the ultimate polluters.

While marine debris has been cleaned up around the island, there is a dump from which polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in discarded electrical transformers and capacitors were leaking and leaching through the porous coral and sand into the ocean with each passing rain squall. PCBs were first manufactured commercially in 1929 by Monsanto and used as a non-conducting, insulating fluid in transformers and capacitors. PCBs, it was later discovered, cause skin ailments, reproductive disorders, liver disease, and other health problems; they are also a known animal carcinogen and a suspected human carcinogen. PCBs degrade slowly, persisting in the environment for years, and accumulate in the food chain, stored in human and animal body fats. Because of careless dumping globally, these chemicals now contaminate rivers, oceans, soils, and even the polar icecaps.

Tony and his two interns were on the island to monitor and protect the wildlife. We went to watch them band and measure a masked booby. They headed out into the intense sunlight with their measuring equipment and log and a stick that looked like a classroom pointer. Tony explained that boobies are banded at about a hundred days after birth because they can't fly yet. After selecting a bird, he ran after it and used the stick to pin it to the ground. Then, as Nadya held the wings and feet of the bird, he measured its beak and tarsas (upper leg), stuffed it into a bag the size of a pillow case, weighed it, and banded it. Elaine recorded the measurements. When the booby was released, it ran off in a panic, flapping its wings against the ground until it settled down about 20 yards off. What is the purpose of banding these birds? Beth said that banding is done to keep track of the age distribution of bird populations so that biologists can tell whether a population is expanding or contracting. The tags let monitors know when and where a booby was tagged at one hundred days, revealing its age. Information about each bird is inputted into an international database.

French Frigate Shoals is a breeding ground for monk seals and sea turtles. An estimated ninety percent of Hawaiian green sea turtles lay their eggs here. Between 100-350 nest each year, and Tony said that the number has been steadily increasing since the turtles were given protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Turtles reach sexual maturity relatively slowly (in ten to fifty years, with

an average age of twenty-five). The adults mate in the late spring and early summer, and the mothers bury their eggs in the sand, about a hundred eggs each, generally on the same beach where they themselves were born. After two months, the eggs hatch, and the baby turtles dig their way out at night (perhaps sensing the cooling of the sand). The darkness allows them to avoid predators and the sun's heat. Once the hatchlings emerge from the nests, they are supposed to head for the ocean. A few get confused and head inland. If they don't make it to the water, they fry in the mid-morning sun or are eaten by birds.

The high months for turtle hatchings are August and September. During our late September visit, there were large empty pits along the beach. The small percentage of turtles who survive into adulthood forage far and wide. One from French Frigate Shoals was tracked to Kāneʻohe Bay, 600 miles away; another to Johnston Atoll, 400 miles away.

One of the jobs of the interns was to walk the runway in the morning looking for hatchlings who lost their way the night before. When we were there, they found just one, already dead from dehydration. The interns also checked for wildlife trapped between the island and the steel wall built to protect the island from the pounding surf. The wall, on the east, north, and west sides, was rusting away. The day we landed, Tony found a baby monk seal trapped behind the sea wall, so he and Beth captured it in a net, carried it over to the south side of the island, and released it on the beach facing the lagoon. In the afternoon, the interns reported that they saw a frigate bird whose head had gotten stuck between two rusted steel plates. We went to see if we could free it, but it was dangling dead.

On a table in the recreation and dining hall were spread plans for replacing the rusting sea wall. (I heard that when Hōkūleʻa stopped at Tern on a voyage up the chain to Midway in 2004, the work on the new seawall was in progress.) Tern Island represents the fate of small islands everywhere, and in a longer time frame, continents as well. Buffeted by the relentless eroding forces of wind, wave, sun, and rain, the land would eventually return to the sea. But even before erosion wore them down, some of these small islands might be awash under the rising sea level caused by global warming. Pacific Islanders on low lying atolls, anticipating the rising tides, are building walls to protect their homes while also making plans to evacuate.

The two-and-a-half-day crossing from French Frigate Shoals to Midway was somewhat rough with a big northwest swell running at us, along with passing squalls. We skipped the islands between the Shoals and Midway – Gardner Pinnacle, Maro Reef, Laysan, Lisianski, and Pearl and Hermes – because the expedition planned to survey them on the way back to Hawaiʻi. Among these islands only Gardner Pinnacle is rock – two small outcroppings, with less than five acres of emergent land. The other islands are coral and sand, and Maro Reef is awash. None are permanently inhabited. Scientists camp on them at

intervals to investigate and monitor the wildlife and to work on conservation projects such as alien species eradication.

Midway is the most developed of the NWHI. After the U.S. Naval Air Station closed in 1993, the Fish and Wildlife Service took over, and a limited ecotourism operation began in 1997. Visitor accommodations and a visitors center, gift shop, bowling alley, library, cafeteria, restaurant, and tavern were opened.

We had lunch at the cafeteria. Filipino and Sri Lankan flags were painted above the food line of the large dining hall, and between them hung a large map of Sri Lanka woven from coconut leaves. Most of the cafeteria workers were from the two countries. As we ate, someone told us that the corporation that runs ecotourism on the island pays the workers $2 an hour. What? Isn't the minimum wage over $5? Yes, said one of the scientists, but remember, the workers get room and board. "Sounds like the plantation days to me," commented Ryan, the only non-white local guy on the survey team. Ryan grew up in Pepe'ekeo on the Hāmākua Coast of the Big Island, former sugar plantation lands.

The director of Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai'i had told me recently that she was at a meeting where an oceanography professor claimed that the reason there weren't more native and local students in his graduate program was that they were too dumb to get in. Another explanation might be that the students didn't want to study in a program that had hired such a prejudiced ass. Or it could be that our best students were educated with a terrestial world view and never developed an understanding of the importance of the ocean or a vision of Hawai'i as a sea state rather than as a colony of a continent. Instead of pursuing careers in oceanography or marine biology, these students chose to go into other fields.

Ryan was finishing his master's degree in botany, studying limu, or seaweeds, with plant expert Dr. Isabella Abbott, one of the few kānaka maoli on the UH science faculty. This was Ryan's second trip out to the NWHI. He had come out on an earlier expedition to check on the lobster and bottom fish populations. Ryan grew up fishing and diving along the Hāmākua coast. "Still get plenny fish over there," he told me – access to the rugged coastline is difficult in places and at times dangerous. He went into the study of seaweeds so he could work in the ocean and help take care of Hawai'i's marine environment.

After lunch 'Aulani and I had to decide what to do for the rest of the day. There were a couple of historical tours, one having to do with the Pan Am's China Clipper Service, which stopped at Midway in the 1930s, another with the battle of Midway during World War II. Not interested – I knew enough

about the history of capitalism already. Deep-sea fishing? Not after seven days at sea. Shore fishing? Can't eat the fish because they are protected. Catch and release only in the lagoon waters. Why catch a fish if you can't eat it? The lagoon fish was also known to contain ciguatera, a toxin produced by an algae on seaweed that grows in disturbed coral beds. Ciguatera can cause severe symptoms of illness.

We decided to drive around the island in a golf cart, which rented for $20 a day. Our cart had a stingray painted on its front. We headed for the western end of the 1.8-mile-long island, to the most remote point, so we could say we saw the whole island. The path went across the runway and along South Beach, which is off limits to protect birds, monk seals, and turtles from human intrusion. We stopped near some iron woods to look at the beach. It reminded me of Mokulēʻia, on Oʻahu's North Shore – dazzling white sand and clear blue water. Some curious white terns hovered just above our heads. ʻAulani joked that they were attracted to my raffia hat, because they mistook it for their nest. (Not true. White terns don't build nests; they lay their eggs directly on tree branches.)

On the way back, we spotted some koʻae ʻula, or red-tailed tropic birds, soaring back and forth overhead. We stopped to photograph them. These prehistoric birds are able to flap their wings backwards and hover. Pelagic, they were getting ready to depart for life at sea. As adults, they would return to Midway to nest.

Back at North Beach, where a bar was located, the crew and scientists were playing volleyball and drinking beers. The beach was beautiful – a wide, flat expanse of silky white sand, over half a mile long. The water was crystal clear. I swam laps along the shore, in 3-4 feet of water, over a sandy bottom ridged by small incoming wavelets. A school of ʻoama (baby weke, or goatfish) swam by. Backstroking, I watched a curious white tern fluttering above me.

Back on shore I met Gordon. He told me that we were on the island at the best time to visit – August, September, early October – because most of the birds are gone. They start coming back in late October – over a million Laysan and Black-Footed Albatrosses, taking over the island, making quite a racket, blocking pathways, and leaving guano everywhere. That morning, I ran into Gordon preparing to go out bug hunting for the day. I asked him if I could see the two spiders he had collected, one from Nihoa and one from Mokumanamana. He pulled out from his cases two vials filled with brownish liquid. The big spider from Nihoa was mixed in with other debris. The contents looked like overcooked vegetable soup – difficult to distinguish anything. "It was this big," he said, making a circle with his thumb and index finger. The other spider, with less debris in the vial, was all curled up and looked harmless – not the fierce creature I imagined from watching Cal's videotape of it, with its two front appendages flicking at the camera. Gordon was heading out to try

to find a male wasp; he had found only the female. “He must be out there,” he declared.

At North Beach that afternoon, I asked him, “Any luck?” “Nope. Must be out there, though,” he repeated. His job of keeping track of bug populations struck me as a task designed for Sisyphus.

After the expedition returned from Midway, the scientists reported that the reefs were in excellent condition. The areas surveyed were dominated by large predators, such as ulua and sharks – gray sharks in the southern islands and galapagos sharks in the northern ones. There was an abundance of prized food fish such as uhu and ʻaweoweo. On land, however, a large number of alien insects and plants had established themselves.

In 2000, President Clinton signed an executive order declaring the NWHI a Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and directed the Secretary of Commerce to begin the process for designating the islands a National Marine Sanctuary. The next year, in 2001, public hearings were conducted on the sanctuary proposal. One issue that provoked lively debate was whether to allow commercial fishing or not, and if so, how much.

A couple of parables of fishing circulated as part of the discussion. After World War II, a commercial fishing station opened at Pearl and Hermes. Kanaka maoli fisherman Buzzy Agard recalled those days in a newspaper interview. He discovered the rich fishing grounds around French Frigate Shoals during World War II – an abundance of moi, ulua, ʻulaʻula, and ʻōpakapaka. After the war, he and other fisherman worked the waters of the NWHI for ten years. Their catches became smaller and smaller, as did the size of the fish they caught. This, along with falling demand and prices in Honolulu, led to the demise of the commercial fishing operation.

A witness to how quickly fishing grounds can be depleted by uncontrolled fishing, Agard is now a conservationist. In this parable, he is transformed from a primitive capitalist taking everything he can catch, to a kanaka maoli committed to limited sustainable yields.

Before the arrival and takeover of Hawaiʻi by capitalists, a konohiki, or overseer appointed by an aliʻi, monitored the flora and fauna in a local area. Along the shores, konohiki regulated fishing, prohibited fishing during spawning season, and limited the size of the catch during years of low productivity. The people were taught sustainable harvesting – to gather so that plants and animals could regenerate. ʻAiʻai, a fishing god, punished overfishing on Molokaʻi by taking away all the fish. A shark god of Paumalū on Oʻahu bit off the legs of a woman who took more heʻe, or octopus, than she was given permission to catch.

Today research scientists and conservationists, both indigenous and non-indigenous, have taken the place of the konohiki. They have a bigger job on their hands; they have to monitor the health of animal and plant populations

on a global scale as human activity has become so extensive and intense that it has begun to impact the entire planet rather than just local areas.

In Hawai‘i the Department of Land and Resources regulates fishing. Restrictions include bans on certain kinds of equipment, like gill nets, limits on the size and amount of catch, a ban on taking females or females with eggs, moratoriums on taking during certain seasons and in certain years when counts were low, and bans on fishing in specific areas designated as nurseries.

A second parable: after a lull in commercial fishing in the late 1950s, commercial interest in the NWHI picked up in the 1960s. Tourism was expanding rapidly in the main Hawaiian Islands; in 1965, 686,000 visitors came; by 1980, there were four million. The state's population also grew rapidly, by more than fifty percent, from 632,772 in 1960 to 964,691 in 1980; baby boomers were now consumers, with voracious appetites for seafood (and other goods and services). The demand for fish by supermarkets, restaurants, and hotels drove prices back up. At the same time, fish stocks in the main islands were declining under the pressure of the commercial catch. A state task force suggested developing the NWHI fisheries.

In the early 1970s fisherman Skip Naftel discovered the rich lobster banks around Mokumanamana and commercial lobster fishing began in earnest, until eventually about ninety percent of the lobster in local markets was from the NWHI. The catch increased until the early 1980s, when it peaked; then it began declining. Naftel noted that in 1974, he averaged fifteen lobsters per trap; in 1984, two per trap (Rauzon). Despite periodic closures, the population has yet to recover. The fishery was closed by federal injunction in 2000 to protect the Hawaiian monk seal, which forages in the areas of lobster fishing and feeds on lobsters.

The bottom fish catch in the NWHI followed a similar rise and fall. The catch steadily increased for the decades between 1977-87, then began declining. Licensing has limited the number of fisherman in the NWHI. It was hoped that sustainable yields would be possible with licensing and other government restrictions.

There was some discussion about whether climactic and environmental changes were the determining factors that caused the decline in lobsters and bottom fish. Climate change, no doubt, has an impact on animal and plant populations, as does pollution and habitat destruction due to human activities other than fishing. Still, common sense suggests that commercial fishing on the scale it is done today has brought down fish populations not just in the NWHI, but worldwide.

The reason for the relatively swift decline is not difficult to comprehend: modern commercial fishing boats have become highly efficient; they are also expensive to build and operate and profits must pay for the boats and equipment and the livelihood of the captain and crew, as well as enrich the

owners and investors. When it comes to a choice between "making a profit today" or "sustaining stocks for future harvesting and future generations," a capitalist enterprise will most likely choose the former. Capitalism thrives on increasing profits quickly, not on "sustaining long-term yields"; if an industry isn't gaining, it's losing. And because capitalists compete with each other (even when their numbers are limited by licensing), a mentality develops that if you don't take what's available now, someone else will. What you leave behind, someone else will get before you come back.

Meanwhile, politicians are wary of restricting commercial activities too greatly for fear of reducing jobs, incomes, and taxes, and therefore, voter support for themselves.

Chasing after fish with hooks and nets is a primitive method of getting food, akin to buffalo hunting. But it is carried out so efficiently today (as buffalo hunting was in the past), using high-tech ships equipped with sonar, gigantic nets, miles of lines and hooks, flash freezers, and so on, that fisheries around the world have collapsed, or are on the verge of collapse, or declining. The trends suggest that large-scale commercial fishing may go the way of buffalo hunting and eventually aquaculture will have to replace fishing as the primary method for bringing seafood to market. Already, almost one-third of the fish and other seafood in global market is produced by fish farming.

The development of aquaculture has lagged far behind that of agriculture in the global economy. The majority of human beings feed mainly on land plants and animals. But in Hawai‘i, before Euro-American colonization, fish was the main source of protein, and aquaculture developed early: by the fourteenth century kānaka maoli had built large ponds for raising fish. According to one tradition, the first pond was built at Hāna, Maui, by the fishing god Kū‘ula-kai.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, more than 200 rock-walled coastal saltwater ponds (and many more small inland ponds) were documented, the greatest number along the protected leeward shores and bays of O‘ahu and Moloka‘i. The largest pond on O‘ahu, at Maunalua Bay, was over 500 acres. Nineteenth century historian S.M. Kamakau describes the ponds:

> The usual fishes in the ponds were the awa, ‘anae, awa‘a[u]a, kāku, āholehole, ‘o‘opu, ‘ōpae, puhi, and other fishes accustomed to living in ponds. But as a result of the prayers of the kāhuna, some fish that were not accustomed to living in ponds came in; such fishes as ulua, kāhala, ‘ō‘io, palani, kūmū, uhu, manini, puwalu, and some other kinds. The loko kuapā [walled pond] would be filled with all kinds of fish. They would cause ripples against the walls, like waves, and this made glad the na‘au of the keepers of the pond and of the chiefs whose pond it was. "The land has life," Ola ka ‘āina, the keeper would say to them, and they would be pleased as though they were victorious warriors.

When continental culture took over Hawai‘i, beef, pork, and chicken replaced fish as the main sources of protein. By the end of the twentieth century, only a couple of the ancient fishponds were still in use. But now with the decline of the sugar and pineapple industries, the state is looking once again to the sea in hopes of developing an aquaculture industry. Moi and kāhala are being raised in large sea cages off of Kalaeloa, O‘ahu, and shrimp in man-made ponds in Kahuku, O‘ahu, and in Kekaha, Kaua‘i; flounder, awa (milkfish), saltwater tilapia, and abalone are grown in cold seawater vats in Kona, on the Big Island. Aquaculture companies are researching and developing techniques to raise other seafoods for market: in Hawai‘i, ‘ahi, mahimahi, ulua, ‘ōpakapaka, ‘opihi, lobsters, octopus, oysters, and sea cucumbers; in Japan, yellowtail (hamachi), pufferfish, bream, flounder, and sweetfish; in Europe and America, salmon, trout, cod, halibut, sea bass, and turbot.

Like modern agriculture and husbandry, modern aquaculture has its drawbacks and challenges – regimentation and overcrowding of animals; weakening of genetic stocks in captive animals who then escape and interbreed with wild animals; overuse of antibiotics to keep stocks healthy; and run-off of sewage and pollution are some major concerns. But despite these problems and fierce opposition from environmental groups, the industry is growing because the economic system we belong to is committed to growth, and aquaculture is the only way to supply the ever-increasing demand for seafood. The only way to stop manisfestations of capitalism like industrial agriculture and aquaculture, is to transform the global socioeconomic system, which depends on and promotes continuous growth, and put in place a system that promotes (or mandates) sustainable living, allowing population growth only when food and other goods needed for healthy, happy living can be produce without destroying the surrounding environment.)

The demand for “wild” seafood will always be there, as not all kinds of fish can be raised yet, and some consumers consider wild fish tastier and healthier than farm-raised seafood. But once aquaculture is sufficiently developed and a range of seafood can be brought to market at reasonable prices, there will be less pressure to catch fish in the wild and more wild fish for recreation and sports fishers, who often catch and release, and for those who fish for subsistence or to supplement the family food supply with a weekend catch. In the meantime, almost everyone, including the fishing industry, agrees that commercial fishing in Hawai‘i and the NWHI and elsewhere needs to be regulated to be sustained; the debate has shifted from whether or not to regulate, to what kinds of regulations to adopt, what quotas to set.

A case can be made for limiting and regulating human activity other than fishing in the NWHI to conserve and preserve their natural character. Isolation is the incubator, the nursery, and today, the sanctuary of biodiversity. Of the

7,000 species of marine plants and animals found in waters of all the Hawaiian Islands, about half are endemic to the NWHI. And the 2000 expedition discovered several unidentified species, including sponges in holes at the bottom of the deep lagoon at Pearl and Hermes. More species no doubt remain to be discovered.

The more human intrusion into an isolated area, the more likely an aggressive species will be introduced and take over or reduce the habitat of endemic species. A parable from the NWHI: around the turn of the twentieth century, Max Schlemmer, a foreman for a guano extraction operation on Laysan Island, brought in and released rabbits to entertain his children and to provide meat. The rabbits multiplied out of control. By 1918, they had eaten most of the vegetation on the island and were beginning to die out due to lack of food; a colony of about one hundred was all that remained. After the introduction of the rabbit, twenty species of plants became extinct. So did the Laysan Millerbird due to the destruction of its habitat. A visitor in 1923 noted that on the 913-acre island (with a large saline lake in its center), all that was left was "two poor coconut trees and three bushes near the house… In my wildest pessimism I had not feared such utter extirpation of every living plant." Soon after his visit, the Laysan honeycreeper (related to the native ʻapapane) disappeared as well (Rauzon).

Globalization has brought much, and will bring more such "utter extirpation" to the remote places of the planet. With modern transportation systems, plants, animals, and people are migrating into new environments at a much faster rate than ever before. Hawaiʻi, once the remotest archipelago on the planet, used to be an incubator of diversity. Since human settlement and a steady increase of human activity over the centuries, biologists estimate that over a thousand endemic species of animals and plants have gone extinct. In 2002, 317 out of the 1,233 threatened or endangered species listed nationwide were endemic to Hawaiʻi.

You can make a capitalist case, as many have, for sustaining biodiversity: some of these little studied (or yet undiscovered) plants and animals might have chemical compounds or genetic materials that could someday prove useful (i.e., profitable) to humans.

You can make an ecological case for biodiversity, as David Quammen does in "Planet of Weeds": as species disappear and ecosystems break down, we lose "many physical and biochemical functions that ordinarily come as benefits of diverse, robust ecosystems."

Quammen cites a paleontologist predicting the effects of this loss: Earth will become "a crummier place to live – a more stressful place to live, a more difficult place to live, a less resilient place to live"; it will be dominated by a relatively small number of "aggressive, versatile, prolific" species (e.g., ragweed, cockroaches, fleas, rats, pigeons, humans).

And as our globalized, monocultural civilization spreads over the planet, creating a single ecosystem, we become more vulnerable to contagious

diseases like SARS because they can become epidemic much faster than in the past, reducing the time available to find a remedy.

You can make an aesthetic case against biopaucity and for biodiversity – to preserve the sheer wonder of many different manifestations of nature alive in diverse natural habitats.

You can make a spiritual case for biodiversity, as indigenous peoples do: plants and animals are our siblings and have helped us survive for millennia. In gratitude and appreciation, we should take care of them, protect them from extinction.

Change is part of nature. Animals and plants have always traveled on the currents of wind and water and established themselves in the new places of the planet. Species die out. New species evolve. What's scary today is the rapidity of change and loss. Remoteness on the surface of earth no longer exists; it can only be created by limiting access to places like the NWHI.

What kinds of activities might be appropriate in a sanctuary?

Access to cultural sites on Nihoa and Mokumanamana for kānaka maoli is a given. The spirits of their ancestors are still there. In 1997, the skeletal remains removed from these islands by archaeologists in 1924 were returned. (The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 mandated protection of indigenous grave sites and required museums to return any bones they had unearthed and removed previously.) In 1857, Kamehameha IV landed on Nihoa and annexed it to the Hawaiian Kingdom; Laysan was annexed in the same year. Hawaiian sovereignty groups want the islands back. (Mokumanamana was formally claimed in 1894 by the haole government that overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy.) Whoever ends up controlling the islands will hopefully enforce strict cultural and biological protocols.

What about ecotourism? Except on Midway, there is too little land and infrastructure and no safe harbors or anchorages to support even limited ecotourism (though, no doubt, helicopter overflights or landings will one day be proposed.)

For a short period, visitors were allowed on Midway. But the attractions are few: the historical sites of the island can be covered in a couple of days and interest in looking at birds, turtles, and seals won't last long for the average tourist. Other less remote, less restricted destinations throughout the Pacific offer comparable or better fishing, diving, and swimming along with other attractions. To make a profit, Midway's tourism operation had to exploit cheap foreign labor. By 2001, the ecotourism contractor on Midway pulled out, complaining that Fish and Wildlife, with its rules and regulations, had made it too difficult to make a profit. In the long run, the best use of the NWHI is probably to leave the islands alone, except for limited cultural, economic, scientific, and educational purposes.

Traveling up the NWHI from the main Hawaiian Islands is like moving through millions of years of geologic time: at Midway, whose rocks are twenty-eight million years old, we were at one end of the process of island formation that started with volcanic islands emerging from the sea; flat Midway and Kure are clearly on their way back under; meanwhile, at the far eastern end of the Hawaiian archipelago, the eruption at Kīlauea is adding land to Hawai‘i’s youngest island; and off its coast, fifteen miles to the southeast, an active underwater volcano called Lo‘ihi will eventually add another mountain onto Hawai‘i or grow into a new island.

Geologic and evolutionary time reduces human tenure on earth to a minor episode, if even that. The boobies perched silently on the upright stones of Mokumanamana belong to a genus (*sula*) that was here long before we were, and will probably be here long after we are gone. Or both of our species might disappear in one of the periodic mass extinctions during which the planet loses on the order of seventy-five to ninety-five percent of its species due to some unpredictable or uncontrollable ecological change. Five such mass extinctions have been discerned in fossil records, the first one identified as occurring about 439 million years ago when life was only in the sea.

Sixty-five million years ago, an asteroid or comet hit the planet near the present-day Yucatan Peninsula; the resulting wildfires and pollution destroyed so many ecosystems that about seventy-five percent of plant and animal species, including the dinosaurs, went extinct.

After these collapses, Earth recovered “ecological fullness” in five to ten million years, with a new array of species. In such time frames, what human beings do here and now hardly seems to matter.

In human time, however, we owe it to the generations who will be born after us to pay attention to the health of the Earth. That this health is dependent on balancing the number of people with the carrying capacity of the places where we live became clear to me as I sat among the ruins on Nihoa: subsistence living was sustainable there for about one hundred people over several centuries; then it wasn’t. For whatever reason, the island could no longer support hardy human life and was abandoned.

What is the carrying capacity of the main Hawaiian Islands? How many more people, how much more economic activity and waste can they support and still remain a comfortable and healthy place to live? Who is benefiting from the wealth created by increasing population, production, and consumption? Could people be content to live with smaller numbers and less goods and money, if it meant a healthier environment?

Of course, carrying capacities can change over time, with new ways of living, fluctuating climate, advancing technology. But in any given time frame, it will take careful and complex planning and control to make sure that population doesn’t outrun capacity and that human activity doesn’t damage the long-term health of the islands or make them, for generations to come, “a

crummier place to live." But perhaps establishing limits isn't possible; perhaps the genetic imperative of human beings, like all organisms, from viruses to dinosaurs, is to multiply and spread, until some other organism or some ecological barrier or change limits their expansion, reduces their numbers, or results in their extinction.

Fires at Makena

Ashes, ashes,
we all fall down.

In the mid-1960s, during the summer, my father began taking us camping at Oneloa, a half-mile-long white sand beach south of Mākena, Maui. During the initial trips, we would be the only ones on the beach. Occasionally a couple of fishermen from Mākena passed along the dirt road, in a jeep, heading for the fishing grounds at Keoneō‘io. Toward the end of the 1960s, we saw hippies from the mainland wandering up the beach with sleeping bags, harbingers of change (just as earlier in the century, my grandparents and parents were).

My father grew up in Kuiaha, on the north shore of Maui; his mother and two sisters still lived there at the family house and restaurant. We borrowed a vintage World War II jeep, a Ford, and a Chevy from them, packed up the vehicles with our supplies and tents, and headed for Mākena. After stopping in Kīhei to pick up snacks at Azeka’s Store and white gas for the lanterns and the Coleman stove at the last gas station, we headed for Oneloa along the bumpy road, trailing a cloud of red dust. Our camping was a low-budget vacation – getting away from home without having to pay a hotel bill. We made our own beach-side resort, pitching canvas tents beneath the kiawe trees and hanging food in nets from their branches to keep it away from rats. These trips to Maui fulfilled two obligations for my father – to visit his mother and to take his kids on a summer vacation. He also seemed to be driven by a desire to escape the suburbs of Kāne‘ohe and live next to the ocean and under the sky. Oneloa was elemental, outside of civilization, without paved roads, stores, gas stations, movie theaters, toilets or showers, running water, or electricity.

The landscape reminded me of the deserts of the American southwest and Mexico we saw in cowboy movies on TV. The road was bordered by lava rock walls to keep cattle from wandering onto it; behind the walls, kiawe trees and pānini cactus grew. The seeds of the kiawe, a native of Peru related to the mesquite tree of the American southwest, was brought to Hawai‘i in 1828 from a botanical garden in Europe by Father Bachelot, a Catholic priest. The pānini, or prickly pear, was introduced from Mexico around the same time by Don Francisco Marin, a navy deserter who became Kamehameha’s accountant. Both drought-resistant plants flourished in the dry leeward coastal plains of Hawai‘i. The kiawe beans were used as cattle feed, and the cactus could be eaten by cattle for its water content in times of drought.

The area upland of Oneloa and Mākena, on the slopes of Haleakalā,

was formerly Torbert's Plantation, established in 1845 on land leased from Kamehameha III to grow sugar cane and potatoes and raise sheep, goats, and cattle. Torbert also bought land for a road down to the landing at Mākena from where he shipped his products to market. In 1856, the operation was sold to Captain James Makee, who changed its name to Rose Ranch. The plantation was one of the largest and most expensive in the islands, with the latest technology for milling cane. There was a mansion and cottages and a flower garden with roses, fuchsias, lilies, pansies, violets and other exotic flowers. Peacocks roamed the grounds. Over 150,000 trees – mainly eucalyptus and pines – were planted for shade and as windbreaks ("Early Ulupalakua Data").

In 1874, Kalākaua was welcomed at the ranch during the Royal Progress after his election as king. Later Makee was a partner of Kalākaua in a plantation development on Kauaʻi. Starting with a drought in 1878, sugar production declined at Rose Ranch; in 1883, after several years of poor cane growth, the mill shut down and the operation continued as a cattle ranch only. Today the ranch, now called Ulupalakua Ranch, is a tourist stop with a winery, selling wines made from grapes grown in the cool upland region, and from pineapple.

Mākena and Oneloa are in a district of Maui called Honuaʻula, "Red Earth," named, according to one tradition, after a companion of the twelfth century chief Moʻikeha. Moʻikeha came to Hawaiʻi from Tahiti, and as he sailed west from Hawaiʻi to Kauaʻi, where he eventually settled at Wailua, a crew member named Honuaʻula asked to be let off in this area of Maui.

"Red Earth" also describes the soil, weathered and oxidized from basalt and volcanic ash by sun, wind, and water . The district lies on the leeward side of the 10,000-foot-high volcano Haleakalā and receives only fifteen or so inches of rainfall annually. There are no running streams. Sweet potato and dry land taro were grown in the uplands. Three springs were dug by the famous water-finding gods Kāne and Kanaloa after they came to Hawaiʻi from Kahiki. The first spring, near Puʻu o Kanaloa, upland of Papapakai, was brackish. Another spring, called Ka-wai-a-ka-laʻo, 200 yards farther inland, provided fresh water. A third was dug at Nuʻu. When we camped at Oneloa, we brought our own water in plastic jugs and military-surplus steel water containers.

Pele, goddess of volcanic fire, is present in the cinder cones and lava fields of Honuaʻula. The area around the bay between Keoneʻōʻio and Lae o Papaka is black with lava flows, the most recent occurring around 1750. According to a story by Moke Manu, Pele once lived in the area. A man named Paea dedicated his house to Pele, declaring no one could occupy it until the goddess had entered. However, he ate some food dedicated to Pele, so she came after him. He fled, and when he entered the ocean, she turned him to stone: Pōhaku Paea, the Rock of Paea, just offshore between Keoneʻōʻio and Kanahena. (Another version of this story, published by L.A. Thurston, tells of Pele killing a pious family of four and turning them to stone in the ocean – "with

the typical cruel and vengeful spirit of the Hawaiian gods" – a stereotypical haole description of the goddess intended to demote her in favor of a kind and merciful Christian god. In actuality, like any other god, including the Christian one, Pele is said to bless the pious and destroy the impious.

Moʻo, mythical water lizards, are also present in Honuaʻula. The area around Puʻu Ōlaʻi, a cinder cone between Oneloa and Mākena, has three moʻo names: Moʻoiki (small lizard), Moʻoloa (long lizard), Moʻomuku (severed lizard). One tradition tells of a battle between the fire-dwelling Pele and a water-dwelling moʻo woman named Puʻuoinaina. The moʻo woman lived on Kahoʻolawe, visible from Mākena across the blue-water channel of ʻAlalākeiki. Pele cursed her for trying to steal Lohiau from her. Puʻuoinaina hid in ʻAlalākeiki, her body stretching from Kahoʻolawe to Mākena. Pele saw her hiding there while making her way back to Lohiau, who was living in west Maui. The volcano goddess cut the moʻo in two, the tail section becoming the crater of Puʻu Ōlaʻi, and the head section becoming the offshore island of Molokini.

The great attraction of Honuaʻula in ancient times was the coastal and offshore fishing grounds. Here, life was not in the dry land, but in the ocean. The name Mākena (abundant, numerous) perhaps refers to the plentiful fish. During spawning season, from February to August, akule came (and still come) into the bay at Mākena in great numbers. As the season approached, a fish spotter was stationed at the top of Puʻu Ōlaʻi. When a school of akule appeared, dark against the sandy bottom, the community was alerted, canoes were launched, and nets were used to surround the school and capture it.

At Keoneʻōʻio ("the sands of bone fish," south of Oneloa), ʻōʻio was plentiful year round. The fifteenth century aliʻi Kauholānuinahu, who came from the island of Hawaiʻi and is buried in ʻĪao Valley, built a fish trap from lava rock there. The walls had five inlets, and fish such as ʻanae, ʻōpelu, ʻahi, aku, and akule were driven into the trap and caught. The bay was also known for its excellent ʻopihi, limu, āholehole, and moi.

The nineteenth century writer Poepoe lists ten fishing grounds off Honuaʻula, along with the landmarks used to find them. A fisherman lined up two marks in one direction and two marks in another direction, and at the intersection of the two lines located the fishing ground. To find the fishing ground Keahua, for example, a fisherman lined up the sands of Nihomole with Paheʻe o Lono, a point on the east side of Molokini island; and Pōhaku-olu with Kaule Point at Kohe-o-hala, a blowhole; the fishing ground called Nā iʻa a Kamaliʻi was found by lining up a cave at Mākena with the point at Paopao at Puʻu Ōlaʻi and by centering the cave at Palikū in Keoneʻōʻio between two stones, one at Mokuha and one at Kanahena (Sterling).

Along the shore were fishing shrines called kūʻula, or koʻa, where the first fish caught was offered in gratitude and appreciation to the fishing god

Kūʻula-kai. Koʻa are found along all the shores of Hawaiʻi, the most common kind of worship site. ʻAiʻai, the son of Kūʻula-kai, journeyed around the islands, establishing fishing grounds and setting up koʻa; he established one at Honuaʻula, but it was later buried by a lava flow.

One summer my father borrowed my surfboard and strung a fishing line baited with raw pieces of aku outside the shore break of Oneloa, hoping to hook ulua. When he checked the line in the morning, he found the hooks had been bitten in half, probably by sharks. The shark is one of the ʻaumākua, or family gods, worshiped in this area, as in most fishing areas of Hawaiʻi.

We used small hooks and line on bamboo poles to catch small reef fish. A good spot was the rocky point below the crater of Puʻu Ōlaʻi. At night we went for ʻuʻu and ʻaweoweo off the lava rocks on the Papapapakai side of the beach. We pan-fried the fish we caught on the Coleman stove.

What we kids loved about Oneloa was the steady summer shore break, good for body surfing. The water was so clear that we could see through the waves. Two to three feet high, or bigger when the south swell was up, the waves rose up quickly and pitched us onto the sand.

At night, we made a fire from dried kiawe branches gathered from the surrounding groves and hatcheted into logs. The branches make excellent firewood. A big log burns, then glows for hours. I was entranced by the flickering fire, enchanted by the dancing flames swirling upward in intricate patterns that never repeated.

The air got chilly after sunset. Brought up to fear the darkness, we were pulled closer to the camp fire's circle of warmth and light. When I was young, I left my bedroom door open a crack at night to let the hall light in, afraid of being enclosed in a darkness from which goblins and ghosts might emerge from the closet or under the bed. No way would I dangle a leg over the edge of the bed – it might get bitten off, or grabbed, and I would be dragged into the darkness. My futon created a cocoon of protective warmth around me. No part of my body was allowed to extend outside, only my head, above the nose and mouth, to breath.

My fear of darkness came partly from European fairy tales about the dark forest haunted by evil spirits, witches, werewolves, and vampires. Darkness was supposedly evil. The tale that frightened me the most was the one about Hansel and Gretel and the witch in the gingerbread house in the forest who captured little kids to bake in her oven.

Later I wondered if fear of darkness had a biological cause. I was hiking in the forest of Nuʻuanu late one afternoon to cut some bamboo. It must have been winter because the sun set quickly, while I was on my way back to my car. Suddenly it was pitch dark. I couldn't see the trail in front of me. My heart started pounding, my skin tingled, my epinephrine flowed. I was ready to run or kill. The loss of visual cues triggered panic; I had never before felt such an

intense terror.

Beyond the halo of campfire at Mākena, however, after adjusting my eyes, darkness didn't prevail. Millions of stars appeared overhead, so distant their light takes years to reach our eyes; so distant, it was hard to imagine that many of them were hotter and brighter than the sun. The starry night was calming. Under moonlight, we could see a ghostly white beach and the foam of breakers tumbling onto shore.

Growing up I didn't know much about the night sky. One summer night at Hoʻokipa Beach Park on the north shore of Maui, when I was about eight, my father pointed north and traced the North Star and the Big and Little Dipper. He asked if I could see them. I nodded, even though I wasn't sure what he was pointing at. The stars seemed to be placed as randomly as dust motes floating in a sun-lit room – chaos. My inability to see patterns created an anxiety in me, but I didn't ask for clarification because I couldn't see how my father could conjure patterns from the tangle of stars above the dark ocean.

For the next thirty years, the night sky remained a mystery. At night we retreat into houses and buildings to stare into the bright lights of television, movies, or computer screens while stars pass unseen overhead.

When I got involved with the Polynesian Voyaging Society in the 1990s, I began studying the night sky to learn how it was possible to navigate by the stars and other celestial bodies. Eventually I could recognize about a hundred stars and constellations, as well as the Milky Way, the phases and positions of the moon in relationship to the sun, and the seasonal changes of the sun and stars. Now at night, when we camp, I walk outside the circle of firelight to reacquaint myself with the stars.

In July, 1997, we camped with some students at Moʻomomi on the northwest coast of Molokaʻi as part of a summer voyaging program designed to explore and learn about Hawaiʻi's land and sea. Moʻomomi is dry cattle range, like Honuaʻula, on the leeward side of Maui. No lights. The sunset was spectacular – orange skies above Oʻahu twenty-six miles away back-lighting the summit ridge of the Koʻolau mountains, the peaks of Kōnāhuanui, Lanihuli, and Keahiakahoe clearly visible. As darkness set in, there was Leo setting after the sun; the Southern Cross had gone down behind Maunaloa to the southwest, and Kamailemua and Kamailehope (Beta and Alpha Centauri) were following. In the east, three bright stars – Vega, Altair, and Deneb – were rising, with the Milky Way. We moved the students away from the campfire and onto an open field, where we pointed out to them the navigation stars used in voyaging.

In the morning, after a night of watching fire at Mākena, the logs in the sand pit were no longer wood, but charcoal pieces and powdery ash. For Buddhism and other other-worldly religions, the desires and lusts of humanity are an

invisible flame burning away the body, which grows feeble, wrinkles, dies, and returns to dust.

Unlike Buddhists who believe in karmic cycles and reincarnation, and Christians and Muslims who believe in heaven and hell, I doubt an existence after death. We simply cease to exist. But I agree with the Buddhists that cremation is the most satisfying funeral rite: burning symbolizes the transformation of the physical into the non-physical, the merging of the flicker of individual consciousness back into the endless, irreversible flow of energy in the universe. No need to preserve a corpse.

Amitav Ghosh, an East Indian on a visit to the Nile Delta in Egypt, reports that the Muslim villagers ridiculed the Hindu practice of cremation. They thought the practice was barbaric and asked if the Hindus burned bodies because there was a shortage of firewood in India. (Actually, it takes a huge pile of wood to cremate a body.) I was struck by the cultural relativity of attitudes toward funeral practices. To me burying a corpse was more barbaric than cremation. Burial exposes the corpse to decay or maggots; and mummification, practiced in Egypt, was even more bizarre. Why would anyone want to spend eternity looking like a prune?

Burial and mummification also allow the possibility that morbidly curious anthropologists will dig up the remains to study them, then display them in museums or on the Discovery Channel.

And resurrection? If a body were somehow restored to life, which body would it be: the one at the time of death, even if it is old and wrinkled, or an earlier form – infant, child, adolescent, or adult? Would one have a choice? If a person had lost an eye or an arm in life, would the body have to live eyeless or armless in Paradise, or would the missing part be restored? If a person had blown himself or herself up to become a martyr, would the body parts be miraculously pieced back together without scars, or would it appear, Frankenstein-like, with scars to show the other resurrected bodies that this one had died a martyr?

Belief in an afterlife, one of the foundations of religion, is partly based on our desire to believe that the good will be rewarded with eternal happiness, that the bad will be punished eternally. But morality doesn't have to depend on rewards and punishments. So what if, in the end, everyone escapes suffering simply by dying, regardless of what we do or don't do in life? We can still choose to live a good life in order to make the community we live in better for those who come after us.

No need to save myself – only a whim
of time, that perishable substance.

—Jorge Luis Borges, "The Hourglass"

The emotional need to believe in an afterlife is rooted not just in a desire

for ultimate justice, but in our fear of dying. I have been aware of dying and death from my earliest memories. At a very young age, I was standing in a ring of boys looking at some chicks our neighbors had just brought home, and I decided to jump over to the other side; one chick, frightened by my moving shadow, ran from it and I landed on its back. I felt its body crushed beneath my foot. I was so disconcerted by having caused a death that I went into the kitchen and pee'd into the plastic trash bin.

After I learned multiplication and fractions in the third grade at Ben Parker Elementary School, my anxiety about dying took a mathematical form: "When I reach ten in two years, I'll be halfway to twenty. At twenty, I'll be halfway to forty. At forty, I'll be halfway to eighty. I'll probably be dead by eighty, so in two years I'll be one-eighth of the way to death." Time and death had a mathematical certainty – precise, inexorable, inevitable. These calculations usually occurred to me at night, in bed, and sometimes I would pretend I was lying in a coffin to feel what death might be like.

Later I discovered that letting go of my attachments to consciousness and pleasant memories could calm my fear of dying. Death was merely, as the poet Borges says, "absence of the world." But letting go was not easy: intensely pleasing memories, triggered by sentimental associations with people, places, and events well up constantly in our minds, reinforcing our attachments to this life and our desire to live forever.

Some apprehended a purifying virtue in fire,
refining the grosser commixture, and firing out
the Æthereall particles so deeply immersed in it.

—Sir Thomas Browne, "Hydriotaphia"

My fascination with fire began in childhood, watching my father burn rubbish in our backyard. By early adolescence I was in charge of the burning. I loved watching the flame pass from my match to the newspaper, fiery wisps spreading upward through the rubbish heap, then shooting skyward, like spirits being released and disappearing into air. Flakes of ash and streams of smoke, like the grosser parts of a body and mind, floated up and away. Fire, like water, is a purifying agent – water during life, fire upon death.

From college onward, living mainly in studio apartments, I didn't have many opportunities to play with fire or watch it. But one night, when I was living in an old, wooden building overlooking downtown Seattle, someone torched an abandoned two-story house on an overgrown hillside a lot away. I stood at my window watching over the roof of a grocery store as the fire traveled from room to room in the structure, rising into the second floor, then bursting through the roof. The night sky was aglow as old wood exploded and sparks flew upward. I should have gathered up my belongings and left, in case one of the sparks landed on my building and ignited it. But as a student,

I didn't own anything valuable. I could easily have escaped with a jacket and my wallet. So I stayed and watched, entranced by the burning house. It seemed the world would be a better place with the old house gone.

Thoreau, in *Walden*, reports a custom of burning old things among the Muclasse Indians: at the end of the year, having provided themselves with new belongings and provisions, they burned the old so they could start the new year afresh. After a three-day fast, all fires were extinguished, and all wrongdoers given amnesty. Then a new fire was produced by rubbing two sticks together, and every household was given the "new and pure" flame.

Fire is so awesomely powerful that the ancients told stories of how it had to be stolen from the gods, who tried to keep it from humanity. The Greek Prometheus took a spark in a fennel stalk from the Olympian gods and gave it to the people. As punishment Zeus sent the Eve-like Pandora with a jar of evils to unleash miseries and suffering on humanity. And later Prometheus was chained to a rock in the Caucasus Mountains for his betrayal of the gods; an eagle fed on his liver in the day, and each night the eaten portion was restored so that it could be eaten again the next day, the eagle tearing into his bowels again (Mayerson).

Native Americans have various traditions of the theft of fire from selfish spirits who live in the sky or across the ocean. Sometimes it is Raven who steals the fire, or a group of animals intent on helping humans get fire to cook their food rather than merely warm it in the sun or under their armpits. The group of animals might be led by Raven, Eagle, or Coyote, three trickster figures. The leader forms a relay with other animals to escape the pursuing gods: in one story, Eagle passes the fire to Coyote, who passes it to Deer, then Fisher, then Duck; in another version it goes from Coyote to Cougar, then Fox, Squirrel, Antelope and Frog. The final recipient is often amphibious (e.g., Duck, Frog, or Turtle) and swallows the fire and dives into the water, where fire is put into wood so it won't be extinguished. Thereafter, fire is obtained by rubbing two sticks together (Clark, Kroeber).

In Aotearoa, in the days when people didn't know how to make fire, they had to ask Mahuika, the fire goddess in the underworld, for volcanic fire. One day the trickster Māui put out all the village fires so he would be sent to get more; he wanted to tease and humiliate his ancestor Mahuika. When he was given permission from his father to go, he descended into the underworld and kept extinguishing the bits of fire the goddess gave him until she almost exhausted her supply. Enraged, she threw the last spark on the ground and set the world on fire. Māui turned into a hawk and was singed brown as he flew off; he called on the storm gods, who brought rain to put the fire out. Thereafter, fire remained hidden in certain woody plants (Luomala).

In Hawai'i, Māui is credited with stealing the secret of bringing fire out of wood. 'Alae-nui-a-Hina and 'Alaehuapipi, two goddesses with mud-hen

forms, were the only ones who knew how to make fire. To hide the secret from Māui and his brothers, they started their fire only when the brothers went fishing. One day Māui placed a wooden figure in the canoe to trick the two goddesses into believing he was fishing with his brothers. He hid near where the ʻAlae made fire and cooked. Once the mud-hens started the fire, Māui leaped out and grabbed ʻAlaehuapipi by the neck, threatening to kill her if she didn't divulge her secret. ʻAlae gave three false answers before the true one: fire could be made by rubbing two sticks together, the ʻaunaki (the understick) and the ʻaulima (the stick held in the hand). Māui punished ʻAlae for her three lies by rubbing her head with a fire stick. Ever since then the ʻAlae has had a red patch on its forehead (Kamakau *Works*).

Like Prometheus, Māui met a tragic end, his impious tricks finally punished by the gods. In one Polynesian tradition, he is said to have been crushed to death in the vagina of the Goddess Hina while trying to crawl into her womb and out her mouth – reversing the birth process so that Hina would die and he would become immortal. When one of his bird warriors laughed at the odd sight of Māui's two legs sticking out of the vagina as he crawled in, Hina woke up, squeezed her legs together, and killed him – punishment for the hubris of seeking immortality.

In a Hawaiian tradition, Māui is said to have been killed by Kāne and Kanaloa for stealing bananas from their cooking fire in Waipiʻo Valley on Hawaiʻi. Māui's blood colors a side of the peak of Alakahi, the waters of a stream, and the shrimp that live in its water; a portion of his blood was also transformed into a rainbow in the sky.

One summer night at Mākena, out of boredom, one of the kids, probably my older brother, thought up a devilish entertainment. We chased sand crabs with flashlights and cornered them in footprints in the sand, then doused them with lighter fluid and set them on fire to watch them dance to death in a brief burst of blue and yellow flame. The desire to destroy came from our cultural upbringing, from violent movies and TV programs. These movies gave us a paranoid view of life and taught us to feel sadistic pleasure in destroying anyone or anything labeled "enemy," which included animals, particularly insects, and certain categories of people as well. In the field behind our house, we played war games, wiping out imaginary Indians, Nazis, Japs, and Commies; in real life, we smashed bugs and ignited crabs for fun. Very low level of consciousness. We were being prepared to kill to prove our manhood and to become soldiers in wars to make the world safe for capitalism.

When President George W. Bush was growing up in Texas in the 1950s, shooting frogs with BB guns was a form of entertainment. For added amusement, he and the boys would tuck firecrackers into the mouths of frogs, throw them in the air, and watch them explode. Growing up in Kāneʻohe in the 1950s, I heard stories of boys in our neighborhood not only putting

firecrackers in the mouths of toads, but also lighted cigarettes. The toads inhaled the smoke, but couldn't exhale it, so their bodies would supposedly inflate until they burst open.

One summer shortly after my father passed away, two friends and I went camping at Mākena and caught about a dozen reef fish, and later dumped them. A decade later I wrote a poem titled "Easy Game":

> The first summer we camped without my dad,
> Sam, Lloyd, and I baited hooks like tiny knives
> and swung them into the blinking eyes of reef pools
> appearing and disappearing in the wash of waves.
> We felt snug tugs of life,
> pulled up rock fish, butterfly fish, mamo,
> one after another, like small hands flapping.
>
> It was an easy game, like the carnival Fish Pond,
> where we paid a scrip and won a prize,
> the clothespin dangling from the end of the pole,
> tossed behind the curtain always coming back
> with a toy – plastic fish, knives, and guns.
>
> With thirty small fish in a burlap bag
> and poles over our sunburnt shoulders,
> we marched back to camp.
> Bored, we circled the dead campfire
> with its soft bones of kiawe wood
> and teased each other and napped.
> No one wanted to eat the fish;
> the sun licked the burlap bag all afternoon,
> and the corpses began to stink.
> Nothing to do but seal the festering odor.
> We dug a pit and dumped them:
> curled and stiff, they hit the sand
> like a deck of worn playing cards.

In more enlightened cultures, children are taught a reverence for life, and not to kill things for sport: the Nisgaʻa tribe of the Nass Valley of coastal British Columbia tells of three boys who tossed a frog into fire and burned it to death; after the community ignored pleas to punish the boys for their wanton cruelty, the woman of the forest, mother of the frogs, called on the Earth to punish the people. A volcano erupted and covered the valley with lava (Wyatt).

In pre-capitalist cultures, a spiritual bond connected humans and animals; the people worshiped animals for coming to their aid in times of trouble, helping them obtain fire and other beneficial things, and sacrificing themselves as food for their human brothers and sisters. Thus fishing and hunting activities

included rituals of appreciation to animals for their sacrifices. Only if they were shown respect and hospitality by humans would animals return in great numbers the following season A young person learned these rituals of respect before he or she was allowed to catch salmon or halibut off the Northwest Coast of America, harpoon bowhead whales in the Arctic, hook aku and ʻahi off tropical islands, or hunt deer in desert mountains.

Godless, not educated in such rituals of appreciation, not taught to believe in animals spirits or divine punishment here or in the hereafter, I nevertheless felt bad about torching crabs and dumping fish.

In the decades after we camped at Oneloa, the area from Kīhei to Kanahena was transformed from kiawe groves with a few houses hidden among them into a tourist and retirement destination for the wealthy, The road was paved and lined with streetlights, resorts, golf courses, and luxury homes. When I returned in 1991 to watch a solar eclipse, I was amazed by the transformation.

During the 1980s Hui Alanui o Mākena, a native Hawaiian group, protested against a Japanese development company that wanted an area of the beach exclusively for tourists. The Hui fought for public access to the coastline based on traditional shoreline gathering rights. A settlement was reached with the developers: in exchange for an end to the protest, public access would be provided and the Hui would receive half a million dollars for kānaka maoli cultural activities and three acres of land for a cultural center.

Around the world capitalists are running up against indigenous peoples and their sacred sites and traditional rights; and these sites, including burial sites, have made development projects more difficult. Burial sites are particularly kapu; most people seem to agree we should respect the dead and avoid desecrating or even disturbing ancestral burials. Violations can lead to violence – physical, psychological, and spiritual.

There are burial sites all over Hawaiʻi. Traditionally, kānaka maoli did not practice cremation. Burning a corpse whole was generally considered an insult or an ultimate form of punishment; kapu-breakers and enemies captured in war might be burned sacrificially (puhi kanaka).

Hiroa describes the various methods that kānaka maoli prepared corpses for burial. Often the body – extended or flexed and tied with rope, with the knees pulled up to the chest – was wrapped in kapa, and sometimes with a mat covering, before interment. Sometimes the organs were removed and the chest cavity filled with salt. Hiroa speculates this was done in order to prevent decay when the corpse was kept without burial for an extended period. Sometimes the body was dismembered, the long bones of the arms and legs and skull stripped of flesh while "the trunk was burned to ashes." In the iwi kūpuna, or ancestral bones, a respected and revered ancestor lived on – bone among the most durable of substances in Hawaiʻi before the introduction of metal. Except during times of conflict, when iwi kūpuna were hidden from enemies

in caves and pits in the mountains or sea to prevent desecration, the iwi might be bundled in kapa and either kept at the family house or buried in cemeteries, often in sand dunes.

Bodies might also be given for transformation into an ʻaumakua, or family god; a family with a shark ʻaumakua might put the deceased in the sea, under the belly fin of an ancestral shark, and after a couple of days, the body would turn into a shark protector for the family (Kamakau, *People of Old*).

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as families were decimated by diseases, and individuals left farming and fishing communities for town and cities and intermarried, traditional burial sites were forgotten and eventually built-over. Burial caves were looted by artifact hunters, and iwi removed to museums for study or to make way for development. Today burial sites are protected by law, and developers have become savvy about accommodating the community's concerns. When 900 ancient burials were discovered during an excavation for the foundations of a hotel at Kapalua, Maui, a controversy erupted over what to do. The hotel site was eventually moved inland and a plaque was erected at the burial site explaining its significance. When iwi were found while digging for a sidewalk beautification project in Waikīkī, the city worked with the descendants to have the iwi placed in a memorial at Kapiʻolani Park. Occasionally, a development is abandoned when profits aren't great enough to be worth the effort to take care of and protect burial sites. When burials were found at the Waiheʻe sand dunes on Maui, where a Japanese corporation had proposed a golf course and housing development in the 1990s, the community protested against the proposed project. The developers eventually sold the land to the Maui Coastal Land Trust, which has plans to protect the area in perpetuity as a natural and cultural preserve.

The Pele family was an exception to the rule against burning the bodies of the deceased, though not by wood fire, but by volcanic fire. According to Kamakau, after offerings and a chant of genealogy to establish the identity of the deceased, the corpse was put onto a bed of burning lava, and "like a swelling wave, a flame swept over it and the malihini vanished" into the lava before rising up again as "a column of fire streaked with whatever color [of kapa] the relatives had chosen to wrap the body in" (*People of Old*). The deceased was now a fiery volcanic spirit. Only members of the Pele family could be transfigured in this way; everyone else was spurned by the volcano, tossed back out.

When capitalists planned to drill into the volcano to tap geothermal steam to make electricity, the Pele family protested, as the drilling would clearly disturb and desecrate the home of its fiery ancestral spirits.

At Mākena no sacred sites or burials have been reported on development sites (and developers would undoubtedly prefer that none are ever discovered).

Resort and luxury development continues. The area is no longer remote and wild as it was when we were kids. Water is pumped from wet windward areas of Maui to keep the lawns and fairways green. Shops selling designer clothing and goods keep the tourists spending. The most vocal protests against new development now comes from those who recently moved in and who want to keep other newcomers out.

Traveling in wilderness areas in Alaska and British Columbia or in the deserts and mountains of the American Southwest and Mexico, I've wondered why like so many environmentalists, I should be concerned about overdevelopment and overpopulation when there seems to be so much empty space in the world. My concern has no doubt been inflated by my having been raised on small islands where in less than a generation, so many sparsely inhabited areas have been filled with people, buildings, and cars. And those of us who have experienced a happy childhood want what constituted that happiness to remain the same forever and feel an aversion to change. (Sartre once wrote of Merleau-Ponty that he never "recovered from an incomparable childhood … that private world of happiness from which only age drives us.")

But recently a friend e-mailed me a website address, with the subject line "Breathtaking!" Her note read, "this is just amazing – scroll around." I clicked on the address, and a haze of lights began to appear against a dark background on the computer screen. A starry night? Some distant galaxy? As the image came into focus, I realized it was a composite photo of Earth at night. The lights weren't stars, they were electric lights, strung around the globe like tiny lights on a Christmas tree. While the poles and the oceans were dark, the urban areas of America, Europe, China, India, and Japan were almost solid masses of lights, with tendrils spreading into the darkness to new towns and cities. It's taken less than a century and a half to light up the planet this much, and it won't take much longer, relatively speaking, to light up the rest. I thought of all the water being sucked from the rivers, lakes, and reservoirs to develop deserts; I thought of all the gas igniting in the engines of cars stuck in traffic jams on freeways and oil burning in power plants producing electricity to run lights and air-conditioning and refrigeration, in factories spewing out an endless supply of goods; I thought of all the carbon monoxide pouring into the atmosphere. "Breath-taking" meant something different to me than to my friend.

The world must have looked like this soon after Mahuika, angry at Māui's tricks, set it ablaze, or after the heat from a giant meteor hitting the earth created a global firestorm that destroyed whole ecosystems and led to the extinction of the dinosaurs.

Over 2,500 years ago, disillusioned by the vanity of human desire and greed, Shakyamuni withdrew from the world to consider the human condition. His antidote to the frenzied desires of the ego: sit quietly and think of nothing; and after sitting, live for others rather than for personal gain. Buddhist philosophy flourished in an impoverished environment teeming with humanity.

Alive in Story

In a scene from *Lā'ieikawai*, published in 1854 by S.N. Hale'ole, the royal child Lā'ieikawai "appears resting on the wings of birds … two 'I'iwipōlena were perched on her shoulders, shaking dew scented with lehua blossoms onto her head." Her foster mother, Waka, has the mana to command the forest birds to provide comfort and nourishment to her hānai. The scene makes a lasting impression on the reader because of its precise imagery and magical realism.

Waka has sequestered Lā'ieikawai in Paliuli, in the forest between Puna and Hilo, while waiting to find a suitable husband for her. Before Lā'ieikawai is defiled by an intruder, she, along with her guardians, live idyllically:

> … never did they weary of life. Never did they even see the person who prepared their food. The only time they saw food was when they were ready to eat; the birds brought the food to them and cleared away the remnants after they had eaten. So Paliuli became a land beloved by them, and there they dwelled happily.

Lā'ieikawai provides the reader with a pathway into the native forest. By evoking the scents, sounds, and scenery of the forest and describing its flora and fauna, the story evokes curiosity and wonder. This is not the dark, evil forest of European folktales, but a sacred place, secluded and life-giving, where, with the help of spirits, respectful visitors and dwellers find what they need. The flora and fauna are an integral part of daily life providing not just food, but materials for making musical instruments (a nose flute, a kī-leaf wind instrument), adornments (a wreath made from lehua), even a house of feathers.

We learn about the features of forest plants through the symbolic names of characters. The five sisters who become protectors of Lā'ieikawai have plant names. The youngest, Kahalaomāpuana, is "the fragrant hala." The hala's long, thick-growing leaves provide shelter from both rain and sun, suggesting her protective nature. The prop roots of the hala suggests her steadfastness and strength; the fibrous leaves, tough enough to weave mats, with thorns along their edges and spines, symbolize her warrior nature. Kahalaomāpuana becomes Lā'ieikawai's 'Alihikaua Nui (great war chief). The core of the hala tree nut is called pīkoi, or īkoi, also a name for a weapon – a tripping club. (In the story of Kahalaopuna, another royal child, the hala nut becomes a weapon for a jealous lover who batters his betrothed to death.)

Like the thorny rose bush in European medieval romance, Kahalaomāpuana fiercely defends the flower of her ali'i's virginity against unsuitable male

visitors.

Kahalaomāpuana's four older sisters are named after four types of maile:

Maileha‘iwale: “brittle-maile,” with small, rounded leaves
Mailekaluhea: “fragrant maile”
Mailelauli‘i: “small-leafed-maile,” with narrow pointed leaves
Mailepākaha: “common-maile-vine,” with blunt ovate leaves

Because of their fragrance, the four sisters are sent by their brother ‘Aiwohikupua to arouse Lā‘ieikawai out of her sacred house, so he can court her. But the maile sisters are weak, like the maile vine itself, which is found straggling on the ground or twining around nearby shrubs and trees. They depend on Kahalaomāpuana’s strength. Although each one is more fragrant than the last, they fail to entice the royal child out.

Earlier in the story, as Lā‘ieikawai descends from the upland forest to meet a potential husband, a series of bird calls announces her arrival: the ‘ō‘ō, the ‘alalā, the ‘elepaio, the ‘apapane, the ‘i‘iwipōlena. What do these birds look like? What do they sound like? I vaguely recalled images of these birds from books I had read, but couldn’t recall their exact appearances, having never actually seen any of them. *Hawai‘i’s Birds*, by H. Douglass Pratt, provides pictures and these descriptions:

‘ō‘ō: a black honeycreeper with a tuft of yellow feathers under its wing
‘alala: the Hawaiian crow
‘elepaio: a chestnut-brown flycatcher with black and white markings
‘apapane: a crimson honeycreeper, with black wings and tail and white under its tail
‘i‘iwipōlena: a bright vermilion honeycreeper with black wings and tail and a long curved orange beak

In *The Birds of Hawaiian and the Tropical Pacific*, we find descriptions of the unique calls of these forest birds:

‘ō‘ō: A loud, harsh oh-oh
‘alalā: Highly varied, including a weird sounding kee-o-reek, a quiet kwahk and other short notes. In flight, often utters a loud but musical krra-a-ik, upslurred and somewhat modulated
‘elepaio: Various calls include an up-slurred whistled wheet, a sharp keet, and a raspy chatter. The song is a loudly whistled e-le-PAI-o or chee-WHEE-o
‘apapane: Incredibly varied calls and songs, including squeaks, whistles, rasping notes, clicking sounds, and melodic trills
‘i‘iwipōlena: An almost infinitely varied repertoire of creaks, whistles, gurgles, and reedy notes often joined into a halting song

Not many of us would be able to match these descriptions to actual sounds in the forest, but the words made me wish I could hear the calls and distinguish among them. Pratt's tape set, *Voices of Hawaii's Birds*, includes recordings of the ʻalalā, the ʻelepaio, and the ʻapapane.

Pratt notes that only three of these five birds are still common in the forest of the Big Island: the ʻelepaio, the ʻapapane, and the ʻiʻiwipōlena. The ʻalalā is rare and near extinction in the wild, found in only one small area on the Kona Coast. The Hawaiʻi ʻōʻō, common in Kona as recently as 1892, is believed to be extinct. (Each island had its own unique species of ʻōʻō. The Kauaʻi ʻōʻō was last seen in the Alakaʻi Swamp in 1973. A sighting of a single Maui ʻōʻō was reported in 1981.)

According to Malo, the ʻōʻō, ʻalalā, ʻelepaio, and ʻiʻiwipōlena were hunted for food in ancient times. And the feathers of the ʻōʻō, ʻalalā, ʻapapane, and ʻiʻiwipōlena were used to make feather capes called ʻahu and royal standards called kahili, with tufts of feathers radiating out at the top of poles, some twenty to thirty feet high. The yellow feathers of the undertail and flanks of the ʻōʻō were especially prized; capes made from these feathers were symbols of rank – only the high aliʻi possessed them. In *Lāʻieikawai*, Waka, as a sign of her great mana and as a symbol of the status of her foster child, constructs a whole house of ʻōʻō feathers. The house has an awe-inspiring, intimidating effect on all who see it.

When Westerners arrived in the eighteenth century, these birds were still here, their habitats still intact.

The places we usually frequent in our daily lives – the high rises, subdivisions, shopping malls, and parks – are not the habitat of these endemic birds. Our habitat is dominated by imported ornamental and fruit trees from all over the world; the native birds evolved in a much different habitat – the forests that exist today only at the upper elevations of the mountains.

Those who occasionally hike into this forest would not be able to identify the birds or their calls without some training. When I attended school in Hawaiʻi, we didn't study the native forest or its flora and fauna; our biology textbooks taught us about the flora and fauna of North America. During the 1970s, when we hiked Oʻahu's valley and ridge trails in the Koʻolau and Waiʻanae mountains, I still hadn't learned anything that would have helped me identity native forest birds or their calls. Not that I would have spotted one of these birds if I had been looking: on this most urbanized of the islands, the ʻelepaio is "local and uncommon" and designated endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the ʻapapane is "declining"; and the ʻiʻiwipōlena is "rare."

Another traditional Hawaiian story, *Moolelo o Pakaa a me Kuapakaa*,

published in 1902 by Moses K. Nakuina, introduces us to another ecosystem of the native forest – the wao koa, or koa forest. The main character of the story is Pākaʻa, who serves Keawenuiaʻumi, the ruling chief of Hawaiʻi, as personal attendant and navigator. After Pākaʻa's position in the royal court is usurped by two malicious, flattering, and incompetent pretenders, he flees into exile on Molokaʻi. When Keawenuiaʻumi begins to miss his kahu ponoʻī and wants to bring him back, his advisors tell him to go to the mountain forests to get trees to build canoes.

The wao koa provided the trees needed for canoe hulls. In dense forests, koa trees grow straight, up to sixty feet high before branching, and ten feet thick – ideal for canoe hulls. The success of canoe building, however, depended not on just finding the right trees; the canoe builder also had to get the permission of the forest spirits, to whom the trees belonged. When the Maui aliʻi Laka goes to the mountain forest in Kīpahulu to cut down a tree for a canoe, he finds each tree he cuts down mysteriously erect and growing again the next day. Only after he promises to build a shed and feed the forest spirits do they allow him to cut down a tree and help him build his canoe.

Keawenuiaʻumi's kāhuna kālai-waʻa, or canoe carvers, are hindered by two birds who hover and chirp above each tree the kāhuna select; each tree turns out to be rotten. (The ʻelepaio pecking at a trunk of a downed tree is said to indicate that the tree is not good for canoe-making because it is infested with insects.) We find out later that the birds are Pākaʻa's ʻaumākua and they are delaying the canoe carvers until Pākaʻa can prepare to host his aliʻi on Molokaʻi and carry out his plan to kill his enemies. When the two birds are finally shot by the famous archer Pikoiakaʻalalā, Pākaʻa is ready to receive the aliʻi. But the spirit birds aren't dead: "…amazingly, when the kānaka searched for the birds, the bodies couldn't be found – the birds were never seen again at that place."

After the birds disappear, the kāhuna are able cut down enough tall, straight koa trees (koa kūpono) for the canoes Keawenuiaʻumi needs, and his kānaka haul the rough-hewn trunks down to shore for shaping.

While native stories like *Lāʻieikawai* and *Moolelo o Pakaa a me Kuapakaa* contain concerns similar to those found in European romances (love, lust, deceit, jealousy, betrayal, revenge, justice, and so on), the stories have the added benefit of teaching local readers about the place in which we live.

The stories provide us with a vision of the native forests of the past and benchmarks for their health. In comparing the forest fauna in the stories to what exists today, we can see what has been lost: the ʻōʻō is probably extinct, the ʻalalā nearing extinction, the other forest birds uncommon, rare, or declining.

In the sixteenth century, when Keawenuiaʻumi needed a fleet of canoes, he found enough trees for one in the wao koa. Four centuries later, in 1991, when the canoe builders for the Polynesian Voyaging Society went looking for

two healthy koa trees large enough for the twin hulls of a voyaging canoe, they were unable to find even one. (So too, the hinoki forests in Japan, continuously logged for centuries, no longer provide enough large trees for renovating the sacred buildings of Shintō and Buddhism; cypress logs from southern Oregon and northern California are imported to meet the demand.)

During the last two centuries in Hawai‘i, after the arrival of Westerners, the native forests have been cut for lumber and firewood for sugar mills, plantation camps, and towns and cleared for sugar and pineapple fields and cattle ranches. Cattle and other introduced animals like the pig, deer, and goat trampled, ate, and uprooted native plants and prevented natural reforestation. More recently subdivisions and shopping centers have spread up to the boundaries of the watershed reserves. Thirty-one species of birds have gone extinct since the arrival of Westerners. Before that, during the thirteen-plus centuries between the arrival of the kānaka maoli and the haole, about fifty species of birds disappeared.

The contrast between past and present suggests some work needs to be done if we want to protect and care for what is left of the native forest and to restore it where possible. Various projects have been proposed and some implemented: replanting native plants and fencing off native forest areas, eradicating non-native species that are destroying the native ecosystems, limiting access and development, and breeding endangered birds in captivity and plants in nurseries and reintroducing them into the ecosystems where they once thrived.

If we want the community to support such projects, we need to educate people about the forests. Many of the urban and suburban dwellers who make up the majority of Hawai‘i’s population today have never been in or have limited experience of a native forest and may not be aware of what is there, or what was there. It’s hard to encourage people to care for something they haven’t experienced and can’t imagine. What’s needed is a shared vision of what we value and an educational system that promotes this vision. Nainoa Thompson once shared with me a process education aimed at motivating the community to take care of our land and sea (mālama Hawai‘i):

– raise awareness of what is special and unique about Hawai‘i
– share knowledge about it
– increase understanding and respect through knowledge
– care for and protect what is special and what we value

Awareness, knowledge, and understanding can come in part from scientific knowledge, but students and the public also need to be introduced to the traditional Hawaiian stories for both their informational and affective value and spiritual insights. The stories not only provide knowledge and understanding but instill a respect for the life of the land and sea; from respect comes caring.

Indigenous stories describe the forest as a place where human beings

belong, where they interact with plants and animals. The stories identify spirits who are the guardians of the forests: birds such as the ʻiʻiwi, ʻelepaio, pueo (owl); the canoe-building gods Kūmokuhāliʻi, Kūpāʻaikeʻe, Kūpulupulu, and Lea, or Hina-ulu-ʻōhiʻa; the forest and hula goddess Laka; Maikohā, the wauke plant used in kapa-making; Lonopūhā, a god of healing with medicinal plants and minerals; Kāne, in his ʻohe, or bamboo, form; Kū, in his ulu, or breadfruit, form; and Kanaloa, in his maiʻa, or banana, form.

Our education about the forest also needs to be experiential – hiking, with guides to interpret what we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. At an advanced level, a person might engage in an art requiring the gathering of forest materials to produce something useful: musical instruments, adornments, canoes, houses, tools, weapons, cordage, bowls, mats, baskets, bark-cloth and dyes, food and medicines. An integral part of the training in the art would be an understanding of how to gather conservatively, without damaging the health of the forest, without offending the spirits that protect its life. Acknowledged and respected, these spirits allow practitioners to enter and gather safely while maintaining the regenerative powers of the forest. This kind of trained interaction creates a close bond between humans and the forest. People engaged in such activities realize that the perpetuation of their arts and heritage depends on the health of the forest and its inhabitants. Educating children about the forest would protect and preserve it more effectively than fencing it off.

If we are introduced to native stories when we are young, they become a part of our unconscious understanding of the place we live in, as imagery or vision. This kind of fundamental vision, planted and nurtured in our minds from childhood, makes a difference in our adult behavior and actions. As long as this vision remains alive in the community, we will continue to try to keep healthy what remains of the forest and make an effort to restore what was once there.

It would have been helpful to me to learn as a child a protocol for entering the forest, perhaps a chant, like this prayer to Laka to acknowledge the spirits who will, when shown the proper respect, "clear the path of hindrances":

Mele Pule No Laka (Prayer to Laka)

Noho ana ke akua i ka nāhelehele
Iālai ʻia e ke kīʻohuʻohu, e ka ua kōkō
O nā kino malu i ka lani
Malu e hoe
E hoʻoūlu mai ana o Laka i kona kahu o mākou
O mākou noa e.

The gods dwell in the woodlands
Hidden away by the mist in the low-hanging, blood-red rainbow
O beings sheltered by the heavens

Clear our path of all hindrance
Inspire us o Laka and dwell on your altar.
Free us.

(*Hawaiian Drum Chants*)

Such chants encourage us to pay attention to the world around us as we walk through it.

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